

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: SUBJECT TO CHANGE, AND CHANGE, AND CHANGE

A SCENIC DESIGN

A PRODUCTION OF THE SCHOOL OF THEATRE,  
DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND-COLLEGE PARK. CLARICE  
SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER'S ROBERT AND  
ARLENE KOGOD THEATRE.

Mollie Kathryn Singer, Master of Fine Arts, 2021

Thesis Directed By: Professor Dance/Theatre Design, Daniel  
Conway, School of Theatre, Dance, and  
Performance Studies

The purpose of this thesis is to provide concept research, supporting paperwork, drafting, production photographs, and various other materials to document the process of developing the scenic design for Sarah Ruhl's *Orlando* by the University of Maryland-College Park, School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies. This thesis provides the following: scenic research images collected to express period, location, space, and emotional/psychological landscapes to the production team; preliminary sketches; photographs of the 1/4" scale model; a complete set of drafting plates and paint elevations used to communicate the design to the technical director and paint charge; a prop list and research book to detail each hand prop, furniture piece, and consumable to the prop master; and finally archival production photographs to document the completed design.

SUBJECT TO CHANGE, AND CHANGE, AND CHANGE

A SCENIC DESIGN

by

Mollie Kathryn Singer

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts  
2021

Advisory Committee:

Professor Daniel Conway, Chair

Professor Misha Kachman

Professor Helen Huang



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## Preface

The design process for *Subject to Change* began with a concept meeting for Sarah Ruhl's, *Orlando*. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, this production made several shifts over the past year to produce a version of the design team's original design. In the end, we were able to produce *Subject to Change*, a Dance Film directed and choreographed by Marielis Garcia, loosely based on Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: a Biography*, which maintained the scenic design developed for Ruhl's *Orlando*.

## Dedication

For my parents, Kay and Alan, who have supported me endlessly and never questioned my passion or desire to live this life. For my brothers who have helped to mold me into the person I am today. For my Mom-mom who was always so proud of me and only ever wanted for me to be happy.

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# CHAPTER 1: THE PRE-PRODUCTION PROCESS

## 1.1 THE INITIAL DESIGN MEETING

The design process for *Subject to Change* began with a concept meeting for Sarah Ruhl's *Orlando*; an adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: A Biography*.

Woolf's novel chronicles the life of a poet who travels through centuries meeting historical figures, all the while changing gender and experiencing life first as a male, then as a female. Ruhl's play adapts this story with magical shifts in time and space, narration by the ensemble, and gender transformation.

Before this meeting, I read the script, prepared notes, and drafted a scene-by-scene breakdown to understand the script's complexities. To begin the meeting, our director, Laley Lippard, presented her initial notes in response to the play and provided the team with historical and contemporary context, guiding words relating to themes of the play, visual research images, and rough design needs. Lippard tasked the design team with exploring the following words: transformation, silhouette, intimacy, and play. These words proved vital in exploring and developing the scenic design and gave the design team a solid foundation to expand upon. In addition to these guiding words, Lippard provided the team with design needs and rules, which included:

Rough Design Needs:

- Swing wildly from comedy to romance to tragedy—quick changes—from costumes to place to time. Feel substantial and eternal.

- Simple gestures that create worlds. Clean, elegant, fantastical, stunning.
- This is a Greek epic and Billie Eilish video

Your love is a litmus test.

- Sarah Ruhl's stage directions are a love letter to the performers and the designers. What do they inspire in you.

5 Cardinal Rules:

1. Simplicity
2. Emotional undercurrent to everything, including narration
3. The gesture (whether design or choreography) need not underscore, illustrate, or re-say the narration or stage direction. No redundancy
4. Everything is in flux. We do not need rules to guide everything.
5. The audience is key, especially with narration and direct address. We are doing this for them-for their delight, transformation, to build intimacy and to play with them. How can the audience exist in relation to the stage as opposed to watching the stage as object? Can the play itself encourage and I/Thou relationship? Can a Production?

As this conversation continued, it became clear that this process would be intellectually challenging based on the sheer amount of information Lippard brought to the concept meeting. To make sure I was on the same page as Lippard, I followed up with questions regarding motifs that regularly appear in the script such as, reflection, revelation, facades, and the all-important oak tree. As a team, we were able to deduce that these motifs should be present across all design disciplines but

that each discipline should find ways to explore these ideas keeping in mind that one discipline may express these ideas in more detail than others. Following this discussion, Lippard shared several images to express her vision for this production of Orlando.

#### THE INITIAL DESIGN MEETING-DIRECTOR'S VISUAL RESEARCH



*Figure 1*



Figure 2



Figure 3

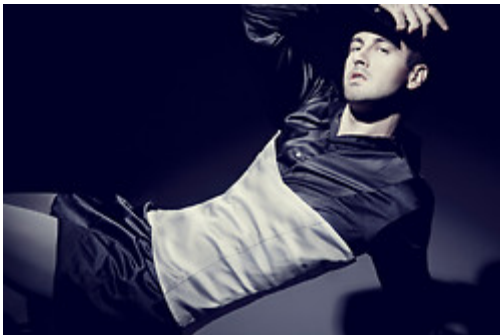


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7





Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17

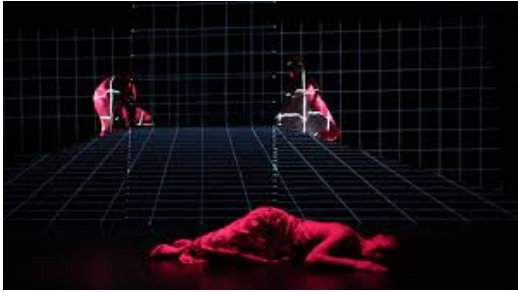


Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23





Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29





*Figure 30*



*Figure 31*

## CHAPTER 1: THE PRE-PRODUCTION PROCESS

### 1.2 THE RESEARCH MEETING

In anticipation of the research meeting, I reviewed the extensive list of research avenues Lippard set before the design team. I quickly realized just how much we discussed in our concept meeting. There were numerous paths to explore including, but not limited to:

- Mirrors/reflection
- Portals of entry
- Escapism versus entrapment
- Identity
- Two-dimensionality vs. three-dimensionality of space and body
- Public versus private
- Expanse versus constriction, and so much more

I knew that my research would need to be expansive-touching on all of the ideas that Lippard introduced in the concept meeting, and concise-making sure I presented a clear direction for the scenic design. I was wary of presenting too many ideas to touch on all of these themes, thus overwhelming the director, and not moving the process forward.

In consideration of the wide range of research paths, I found myself focusing on the four guiding words given to the team in the concept meeting would be the best place to start: transformation, silhouette, intimacy, and play. As I began collecting artwork, textures, environments, and architecture, I had several follow-up

conversations with Lippard, who tasked me with creating a liminal space. The Miriam-Webster dictionary defines liminal (adjective) as:

1. Of, relating to, or situated at a sensory threshold: barely perceptible or capable of eliciting a response
2. Of, relating to, or being an intermediate state, phase or condition: In-between, transitional.

Discovering what liminal meant clarified for me what we needed to achieve in terms of transformation-Lippard wanted a space that could live in transition that could easily take us from scene to scene and century to century. I established my research in the 16th century, the period given at the beginning of the script, exploring theatre spaces of the 16th century and beyond (*figure 32*). I also researched what I would consider modern interpretations of classic architecture and silhouette to expand upon my initial impulses (*figure 37*). I wanted to explore recognizable architecture that could span centuries, and for me, that began with archways. Conveniently, one of the last lines of the script that Orlando speaks is:

"I can begin to live again.

The little boat is climbing through the white arch

Of a thousand deaths.

I am about to understand..."

This line proved essential to the development of the design as the process continued.

To further explore the guiding words, I began with transformation, finding reflections both in human-made materials and natural surfaces that altered the

viewer's perception of space (figure 34). I also explored compelling installations of architecture with sheer material that could transform with media and lighting, which lent itself to both transformation and silhouette (figure 37). Intimacy and play came in the form of larger-than-life scale Baroque moldings and appliques, delicate mazes of archways, and luxurious textures and color palettes (figure 35, 36 & 39).

Both the lighting designer, Eric Pitney, and the media designer, Sean Preston shared research that depicted strong silhouettes, bold colors, and strong shadows. Throughout the meeting, I noticed that many of the designers shared several research images, and as the process continued I became more and more excited to be working with this team. We felt that we were on the same page for so much of this process and I believe the end product truly showed this.

Following my presentation, I received a great deal of feedback, with even more avenues to explore. Lippard asked that I continue to develop ideas, making sure to touch on the following:

- Represent a manipulation of time and space
- Create the bones of architecture
- Allow actors to be able to jump in and out of moments/space
- Places to hide all of the costumes
- A place to hide footlights
- An elevated deck, and more.

These notes were invaluable in helping me get to a jumping-off point. However, I struggled to manage the quantity of directions Lippard wanted me to explore. We

had not yet defined what would be truly vital to achieve in the scenic design, and with the sheer quantity of ideas, I found myself drowning in information. At this point, I began to worry about achieving everything the director had laid out before me.

#### THE RESEARCH MEETING-SCENIC DESIGNER'S RESEARCH PLATES

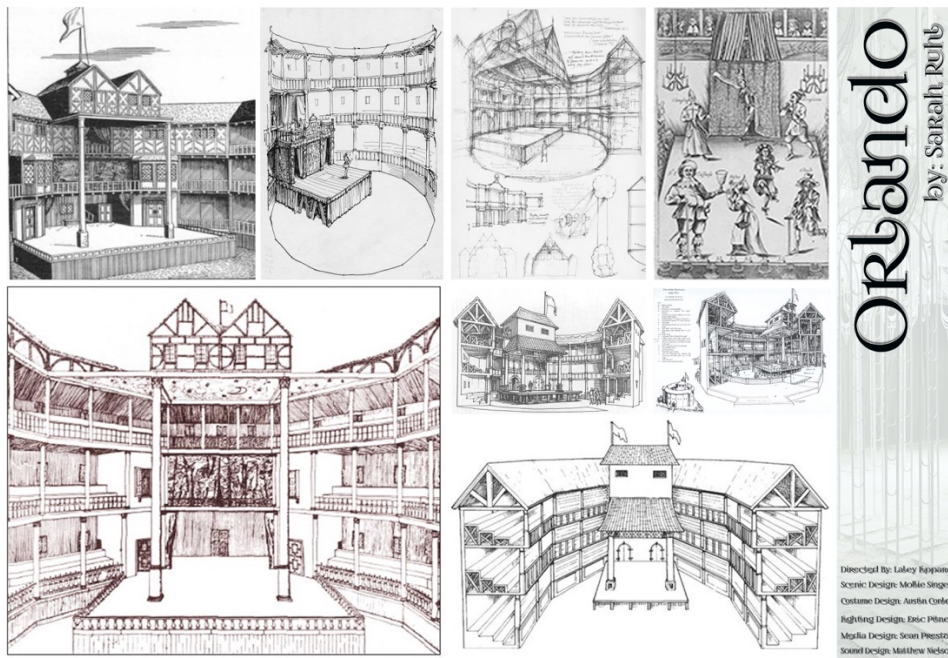


Figure 32



Figure 33

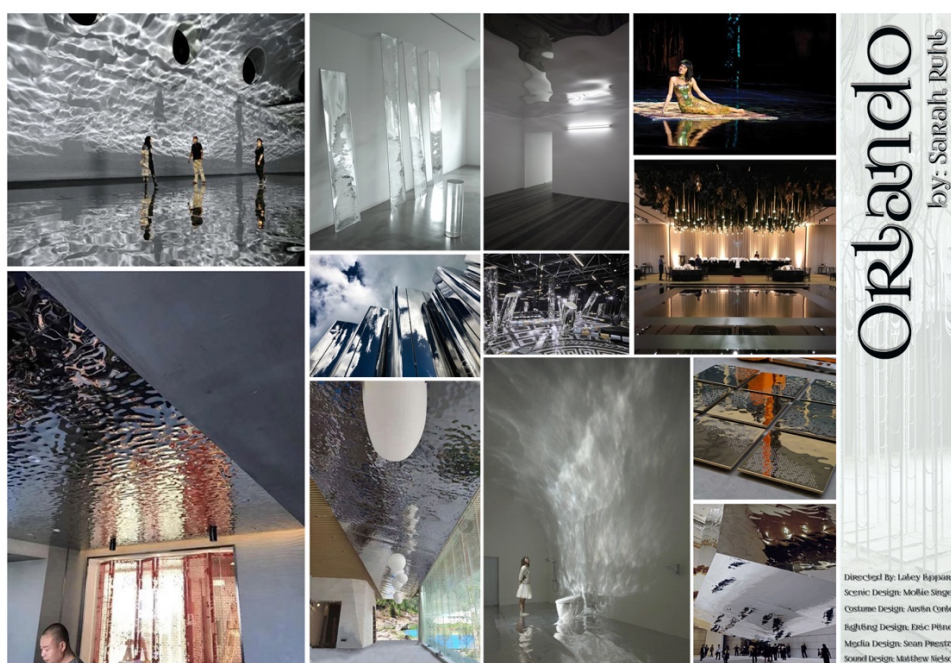


Figure 34



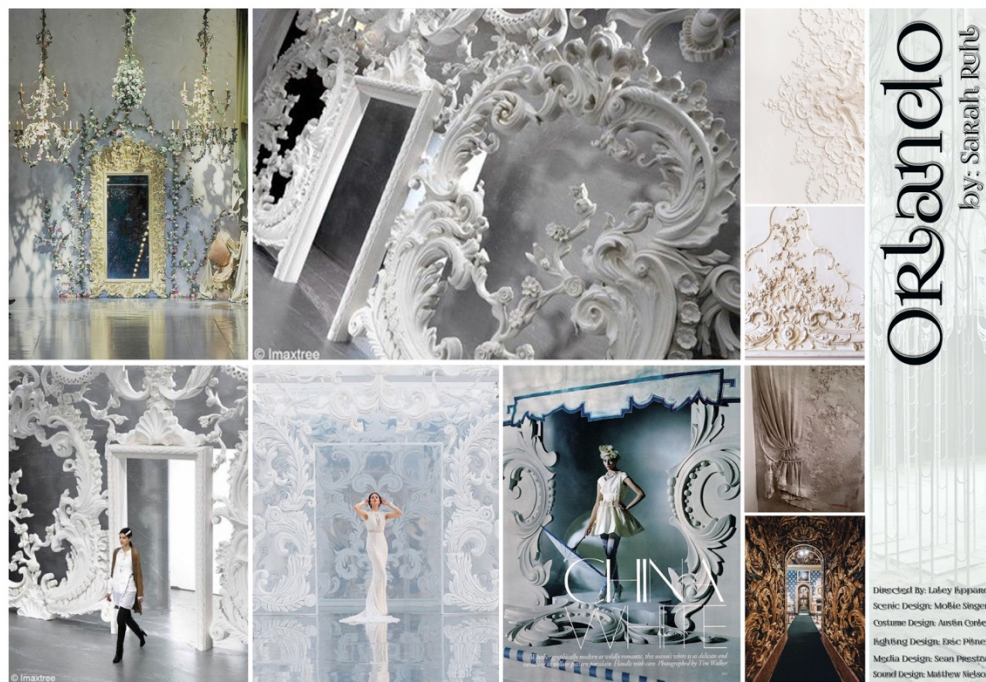


Figure 35

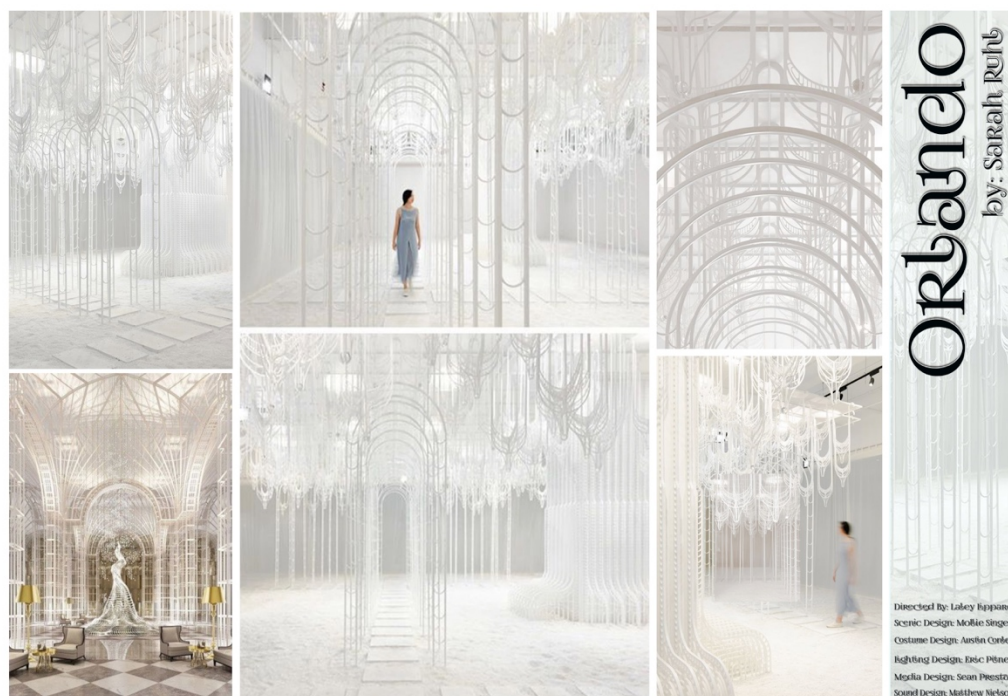


Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38





*Figure 39*

As the research meeting wrapped up, there seemed to be a buzz in the room. I remember feeling so excited that our costume designer, Austin Conlee, and I found many similarities in our research and interpretations of the script; however, this was not as exciting for our director. Directly after the meeting, Lippard pulled me aside to question just how similar our worlds were becoming. She wanted to caution me that the scenic design should not overpower the costumes. I still left the meeting excited and ready to dive into preliminary designs. However, I would soon discover that this was the starting point of several obstacles, miscommunications, and frustrations between myself and the director.

### 1.3 DEVELOPING THE DESIGN

Following our research meeting, I began exploring what our environment needed to be. From the start, I wanted to explore the over-scaled architectural details that I found in my research, as I felt it was both beautiful and timeless. I also wanted to develop a world that expressed the transitional state that Orlando experiences. Orlando swiftly moves from one century to the next with ease, as if they've blinked their eyes and the next period is suddenly upon us. Despite these impulses, I was quickly overwhelmed with the sheer amount of information that I had to process while achieving all of the design needs Lippard placed before me. After the conversation following the research meeting, Lippard and I had several conversations about what the scenic design would need to do, including hiding actors, allowing seamless transitions from scene to scene, and immerse the audience. The idea to create something immersive did not come up until about four weeks into the process when I received an email urging me to think about the design in a way that would envelope the audience, making them a part of the world. I was excited to explore what that meant for the show's design. However, I also had some hesitancy based on our previous conversations regarding seating plans and the limitations of working in a black box space. From here, I knew it was vital to nail down the seating plan to develop the design further and achieve the show's needs.

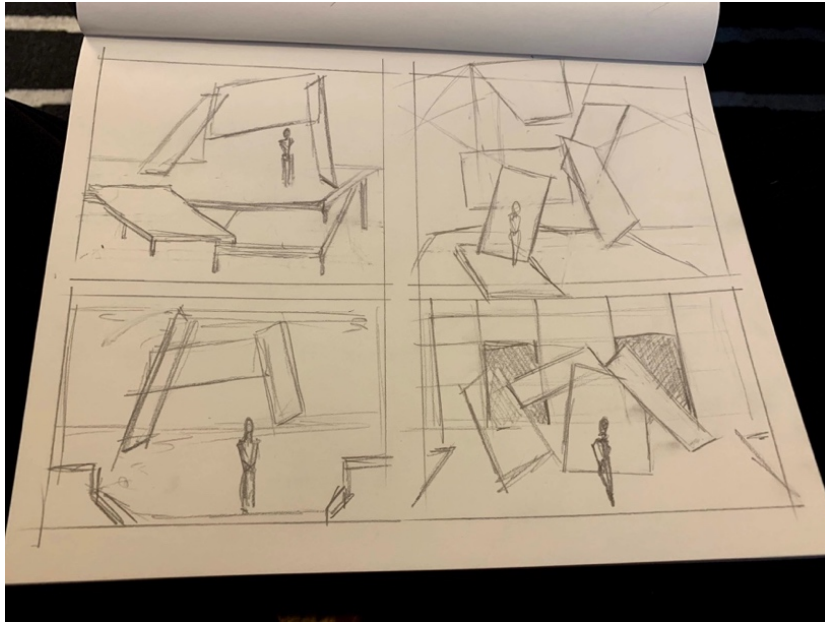
After several discussions revolving around the audience seating, we landed on a proscenium-style setup. The seating conversation became the first of many challenges, as I felt the discussions we were having about creating an immersive

space would not be compatible with a proscenium layout. I felt that, in the black-box space, it would be imperative that we surround the audience in some way but achieving that with a proscenium seating plan would not provide us with many opportunities to do so. I offered to explore an in-the-round seating option as well as a thrust configuration, but Lippard was reluctant to veer from the proscenium-style seating she wanted. Moving forward, I began to sketch ideas based on our many conversations, exploring the proscenium-style seating plan in addition to architectural/scenic elements we had discussed.

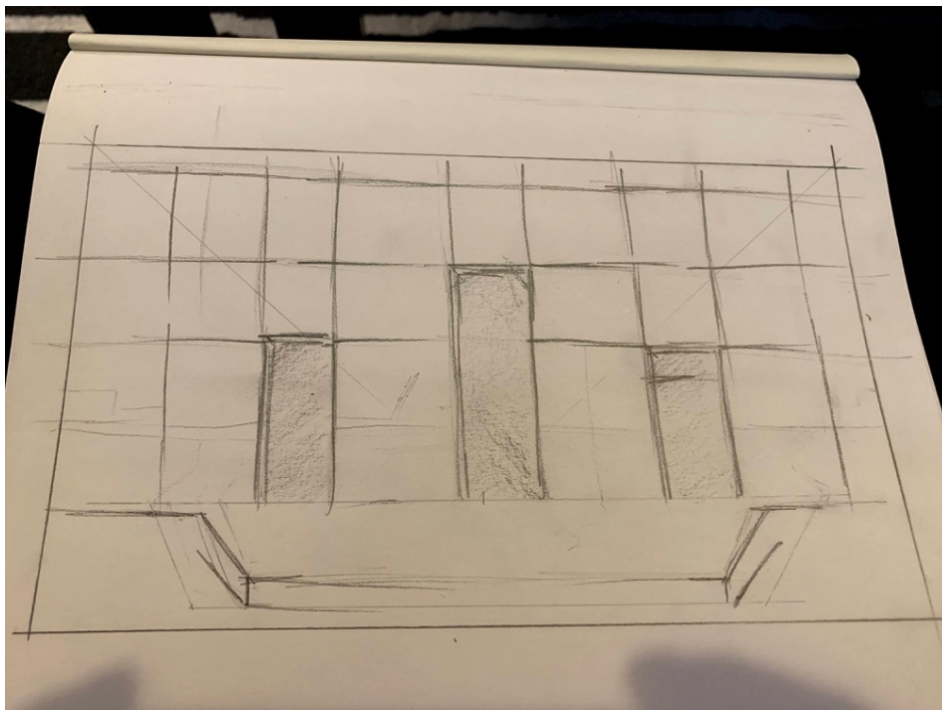
In the proscenium layout, I went in several different directions to give the director and me a place to start a conversation. I felt it would be necessary to look at sketches first to get specific feedback. For the first round of sketches (figure 40 & 41), I explored panels that could transform via manipulation by the actors. I supported these ideas with additional research (figure 42) to talk through all of the possibilities this type of scenery could create. I felt this design would give us an exciting surface for projections while also serving the needs of hiding actors and transforming seamlessly from scene to scene. However, as I worked with this idea further, I realized I was getting away from what I was originally inspired by: the delicacy of the architectural pieces with sheer fabric that felt both specific and timeless. I understood our director did not want the scenery to feel ornate in any way, but I felt we could still achieve something beautiful in its simplicity of form and composition. I illustrated these ideas in sketches (figure 43 & 44) and finally a rendering (figure 45) for the preliminary design meeting supported by a ground plan and section (figure

46). By this point, I had several discussions with Lippard and thought we might be getting closer to a design that accomplished everything that we had discussed and represented essential themes in the play. During the preliminary design meeting, I could tell that the director was not happy with the design, and she expressed her frustration with what I had presented. She said that this design did not accomplish the specific things she asked for and even suggested that I was not hearing her. At this point, I felt the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions on our ability to communicate effectively. I also recognized that I was not asking the right questions to help decipher what she needed, but I could tell I was beginning to shut down based on how Lippard spoke to me. I felt Lippard questioning my abilities and choices, and therefore I felt disrespected despite my continuous efforts to make this design beautiful and functional. Following the preliminary design meeting, I took a day to reconsider what I was presenting and reevaluated the information I needed from Lippard.

INITIAL SKETCHES, SUPPORTING RESEARCH, AND PRELIMINARY RENDERING



*Figure 40*



*Figure 41*



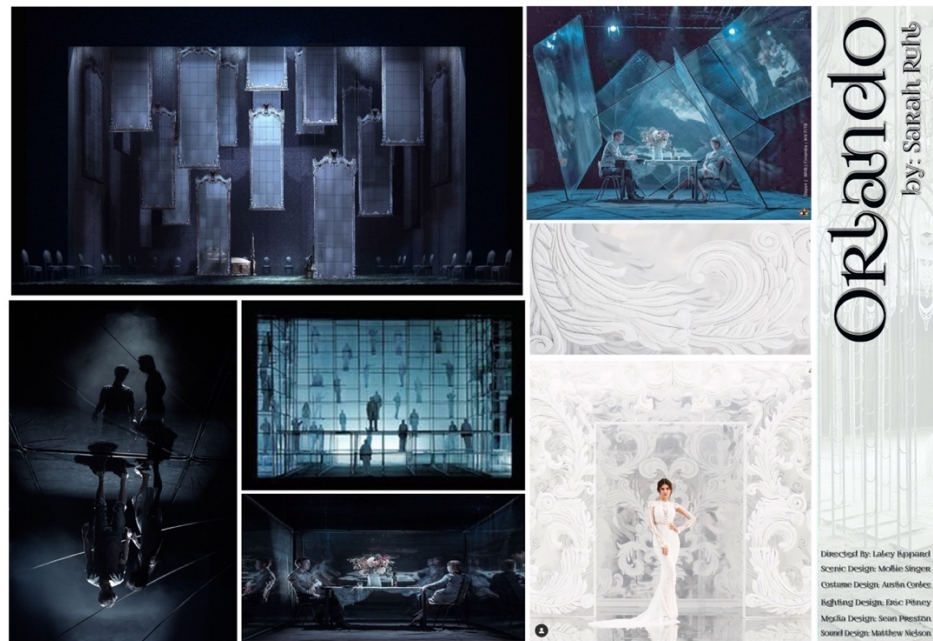


Figure 42

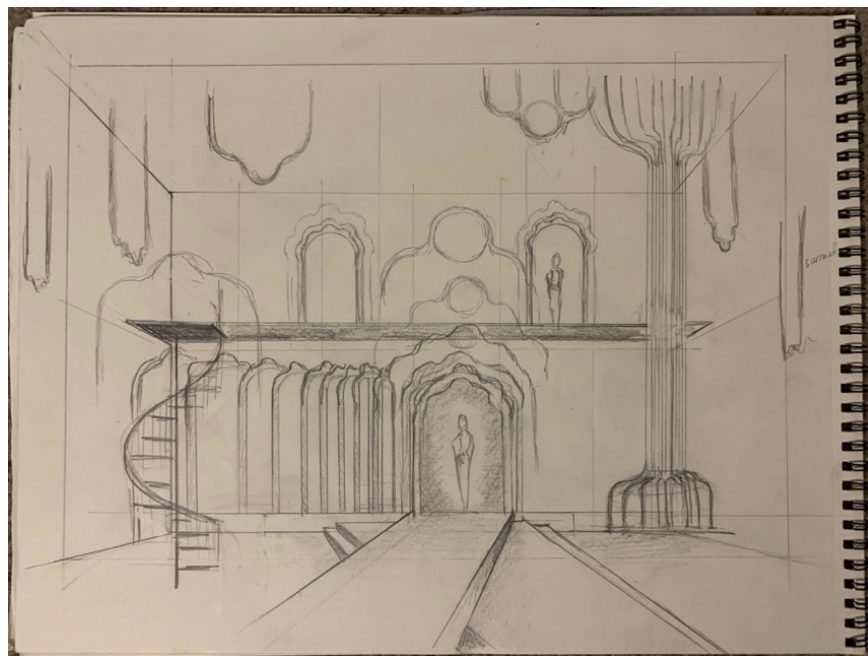
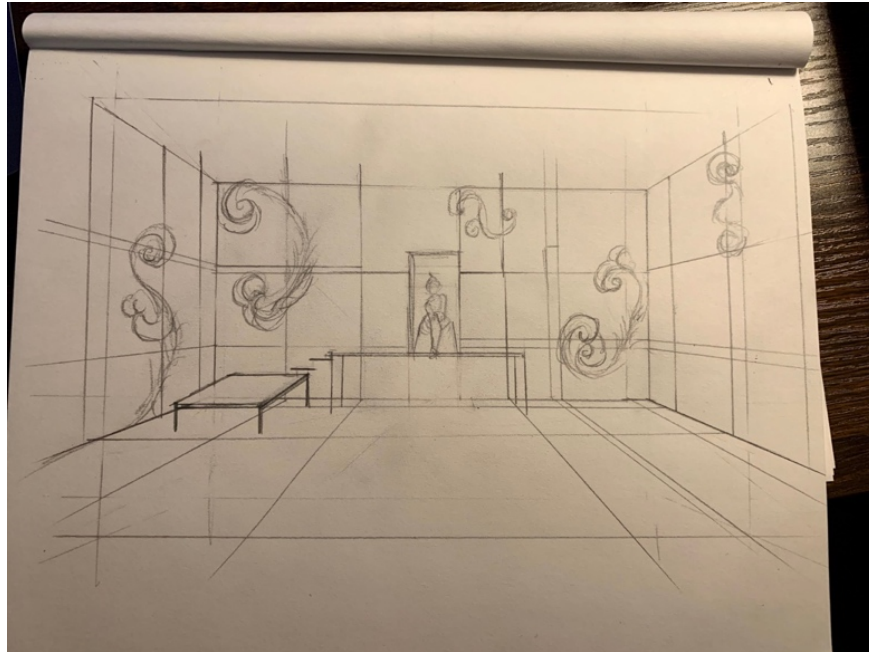


Figure 43



*Figure 44*



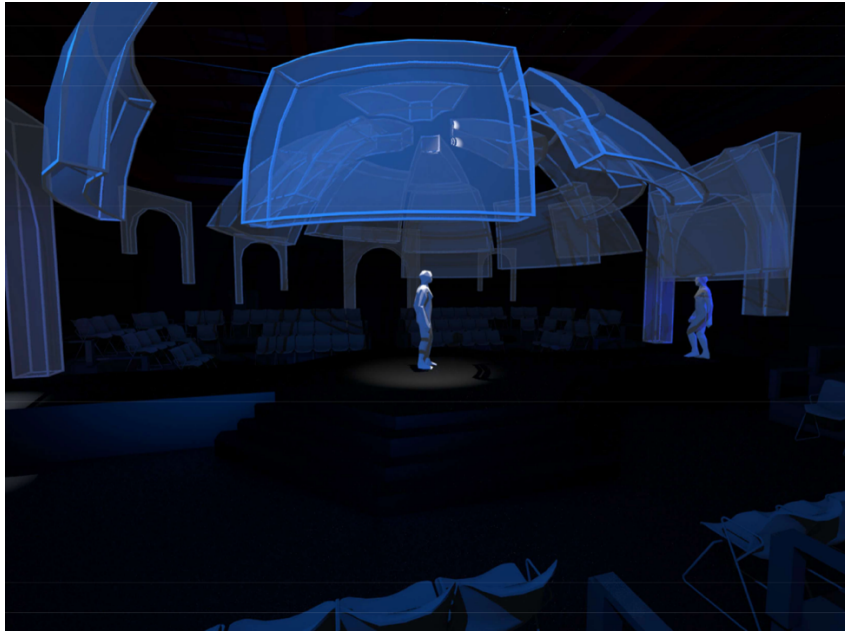
*Figure 45*





felt less inhibited in creating the world of the play. I decided to show this design in the proscenium style seating that Lippard wanted to discuss the positives and negatives of both seating styles. This conversation brought us to yet another seating style: the thrust configuration. This edit of the design (figure 52) was a significant step in moving in the right direction. Ultimately, this ended up being the best of both worlds; a space that felt immersive, with the audience on three sides of the space, while still giving the actors places to emerge from and disappear when needed- something that would have been challenging with the in-the-round option. Ultimately, though getting to this point was incredibly difficult, I am happy that I stood up for myself and made sure to keep the best interest of the production at the forefront of my process.

## SEATING OPTIONS AND UPDATED RENDERINGS



*Figure 47*



*Figure 48*



Figure 49

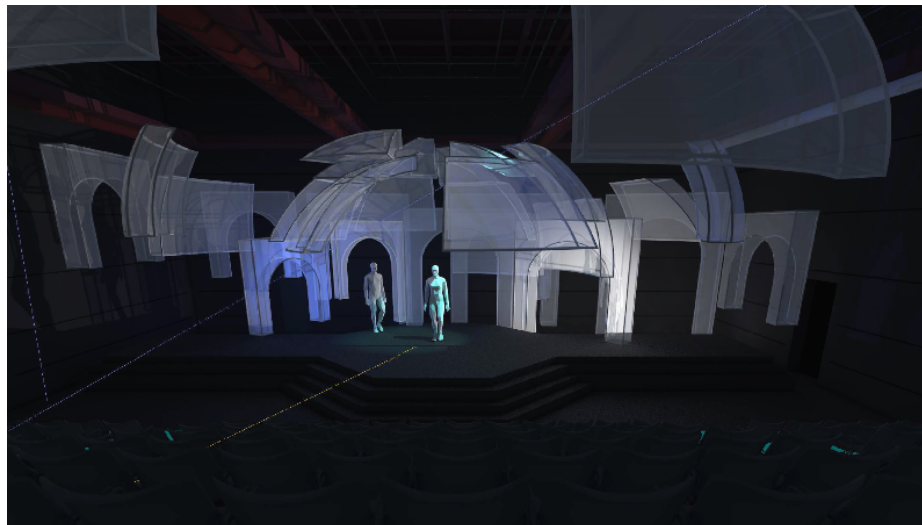
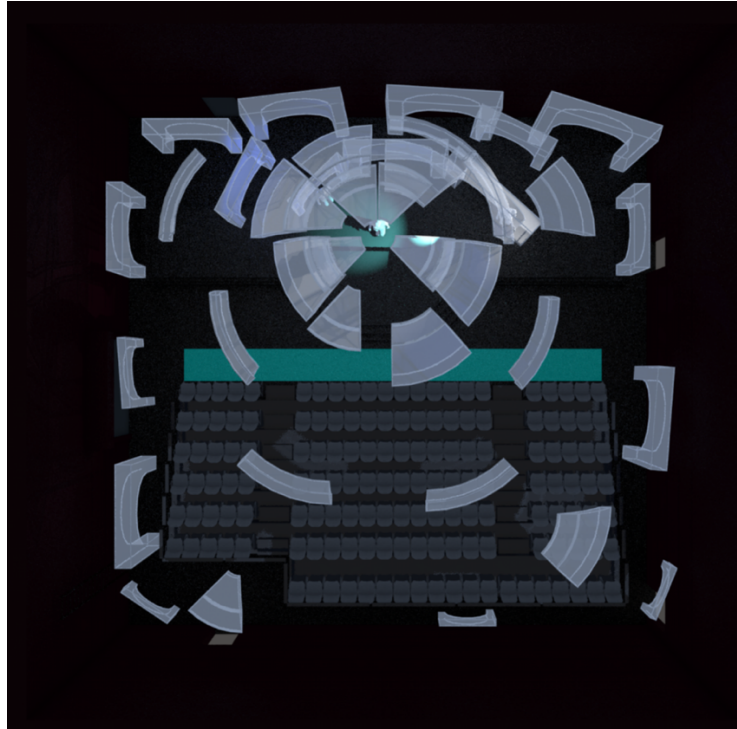


Figure 50



*Figure 51*



*Figure 52*



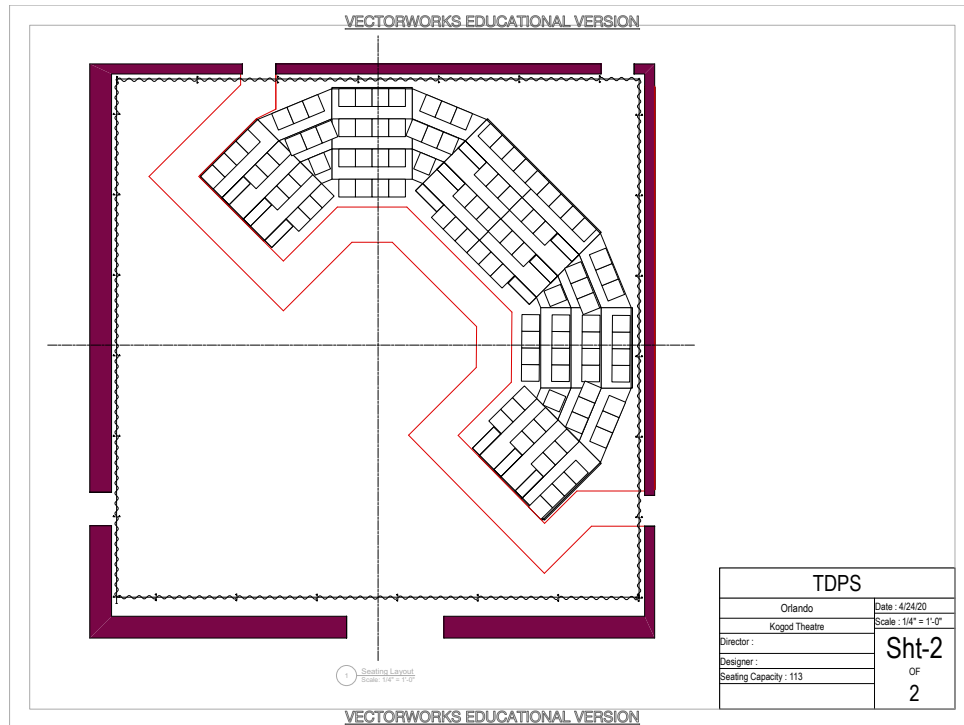


Figure 53

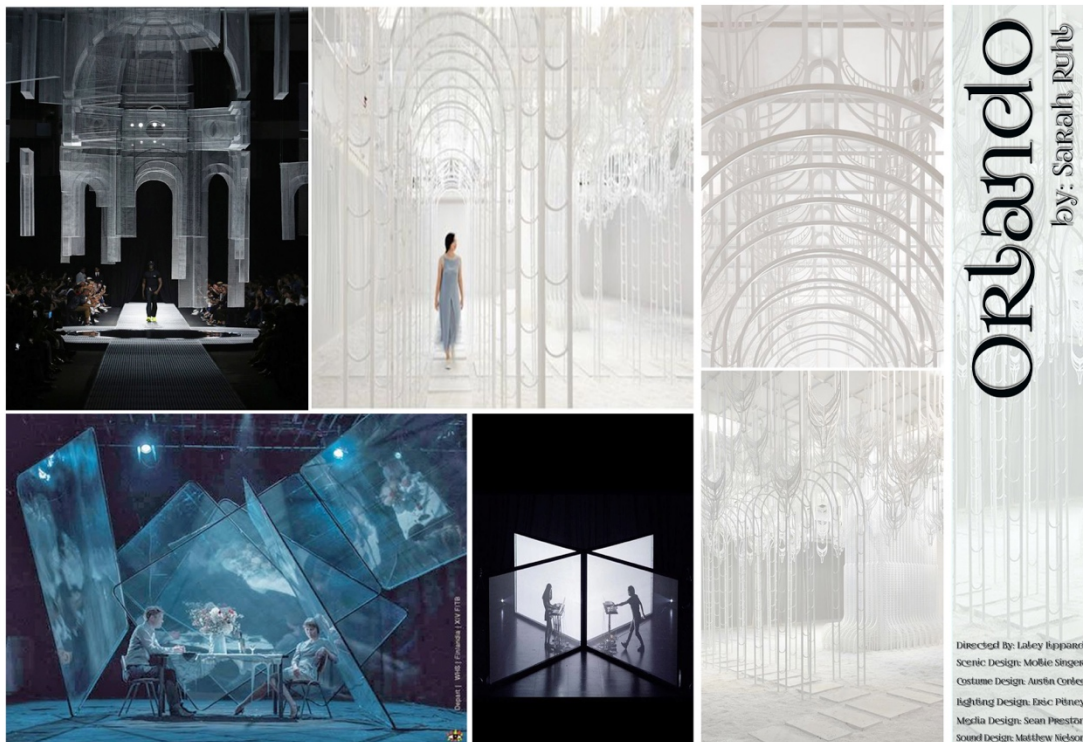


Figure 54

## 1.4 THE FINAL DESIGN MEETING

After we concluded that the thrust configuration was the best option for us, the real work began. I compiled one last research plate to consolidate the more significant ideas of the design. The main inspiration that attracted both Lippard and I is in figure 54. We loved the delicacy of the architecture, its simplicity, and its ability to create and support a liminal space. Having paired down to this specific research, I knew I could develop a design that the director would support.

In order to execute this design, I began to model the design in Vectorworks. Due to studio time restrictions during the beginning of the pandemic, I had limited resources to construct a model for this production in the beginning stages.

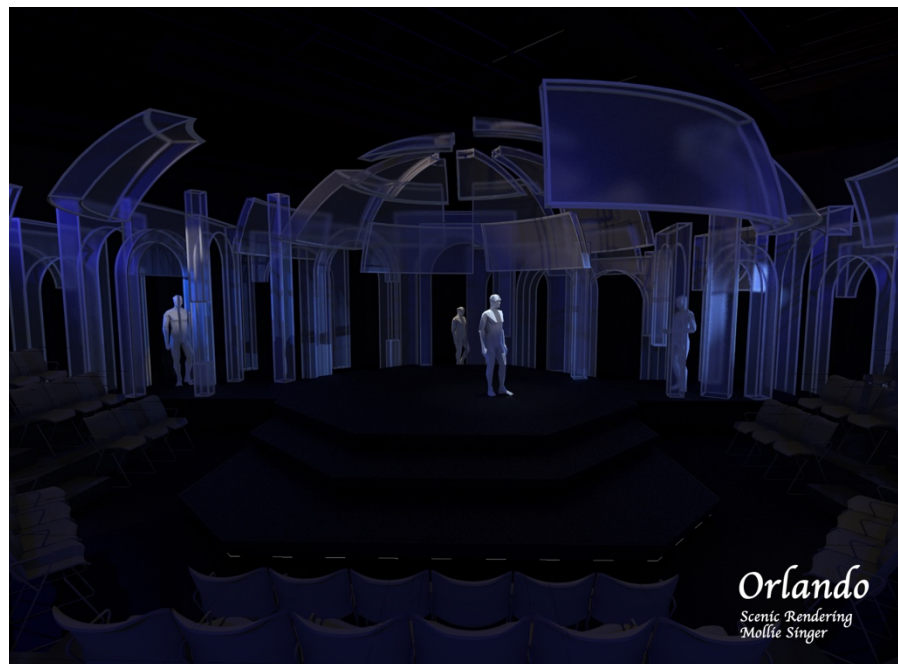
Nonetheless, I needed to visualize this design in a 3-D space, and it was equally crucial that Lippard understood what the set looked like and how it would function. Working in Vectorworks, I drafted close to 50 variations of arches, domes, and columns to visualize and play in the space, much like I would in a 'color-neutral model or 'bash' model. I was able to change the composition of the design as needed and quickly share variations of the design with the rest of the team. Once I was happy with the composition and following several conversations with the director, we agreed that the design would accomplish all of the things we needed it to do. For the final design meeting, I shared the design with the team through renderings of the set (figures 55-60) from several locations in the seating to see the different perspectives we would have. Also, during this meeting, I explained how we got to this design using

the principles that Lippard set out for the team from the start. The deck design served as a partial traditional thrust stage with several levels where we could find the ensemble stages and partial fashion runway to show off the beautiful costume designs by Austin Conlee. During this meeting, I also made sure to discuss potential materials that we could wrap around the architectural pieces. I wanted to ensure we had ample surfaces for the media designer and that the material could feel both soft and transparent at times and opaque and substantial at other times. I asked that the media designer offer any suggestions to add to the list of options to be tested later. This set design immediately sparked ideas for our Lighting Designer, Eric Pitney, who asked if he could embed lighting instruments in the bases of the architecture units. I took some time to think about what this might look like, and in the long run, I am so glad we went with his idea because it gave a new life to the design. I left this meeting feeling satisfied with the design but mostly relieved that we settled on something that both the director and I agreed upon.

## 1.5 FINAL DESIGN RENDERINGS AND MODEL

For the final design presentation, I produced 6 Photoshop renderings and a ¼" scale model of the design. I also provided a three-D model of the design in Vectorworks for use by the media and lighting designers. In the end, I believe the final design combined all of the important elements our director highlighted in our concept meeting: transformation, silhouette, intimacy, and play. The set became a playground for the media and lighting designers to transform and create new and interesting silhouettes. Figures 55-60 illustrate the final design presented from the vantage point of house center, house right, and house left. Figures 61-65 are of the ¼" scale model.

### FINAL RENDERINGS AND ¼" SCALE MODEL

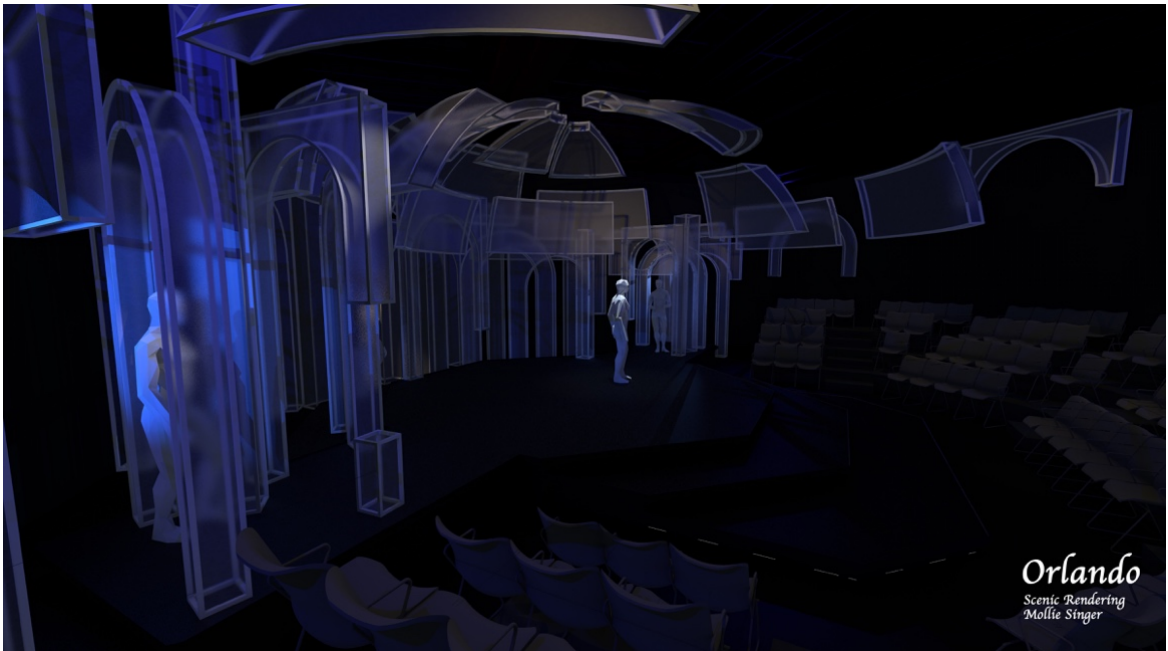


*Figure 55*





*Figure 56*



*Figure 57*

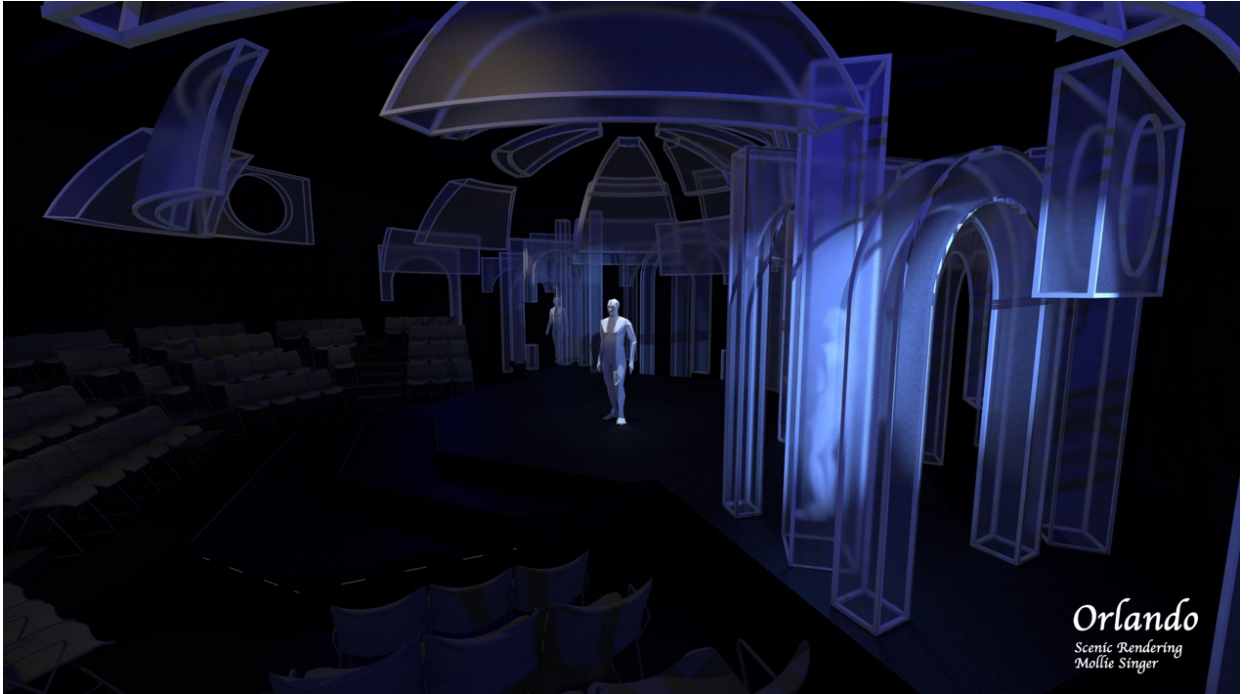


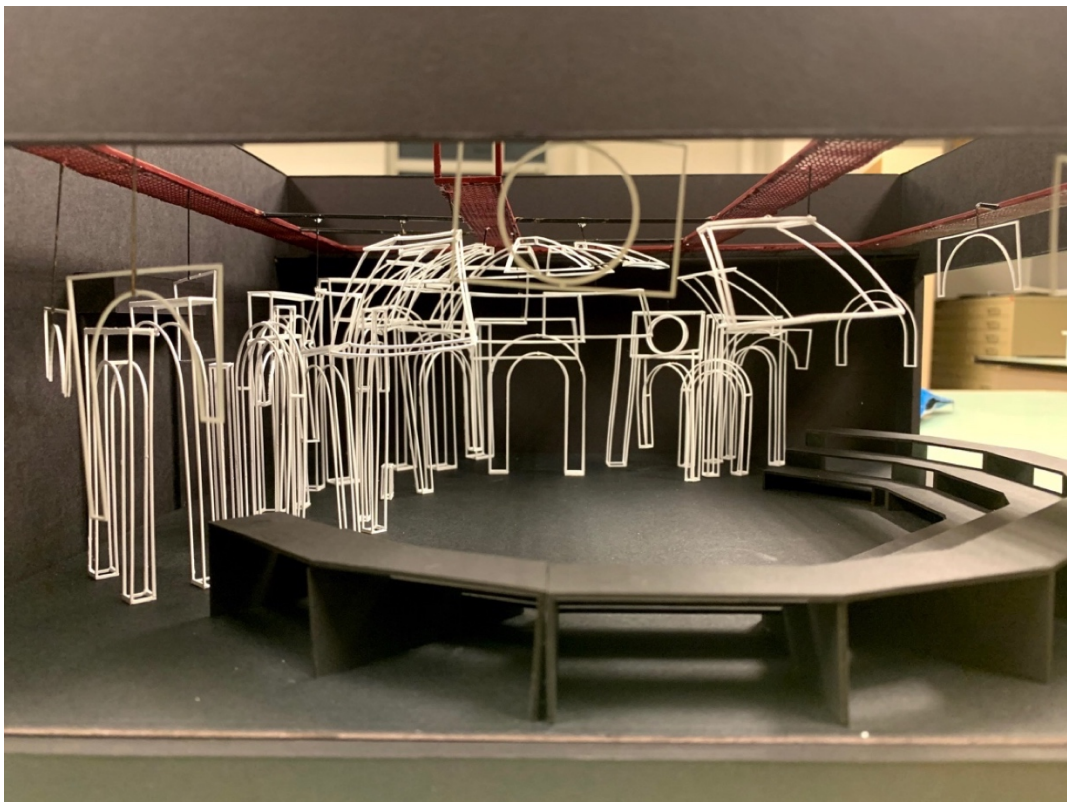
Figure 58



Figure 59

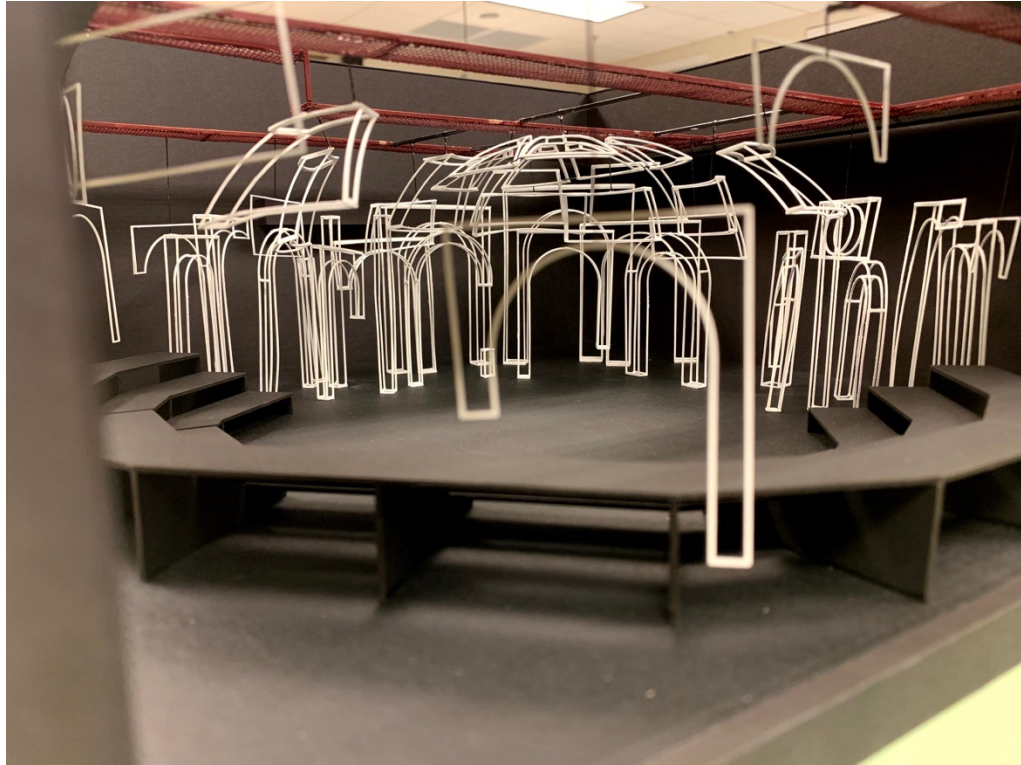


*Figure 60*

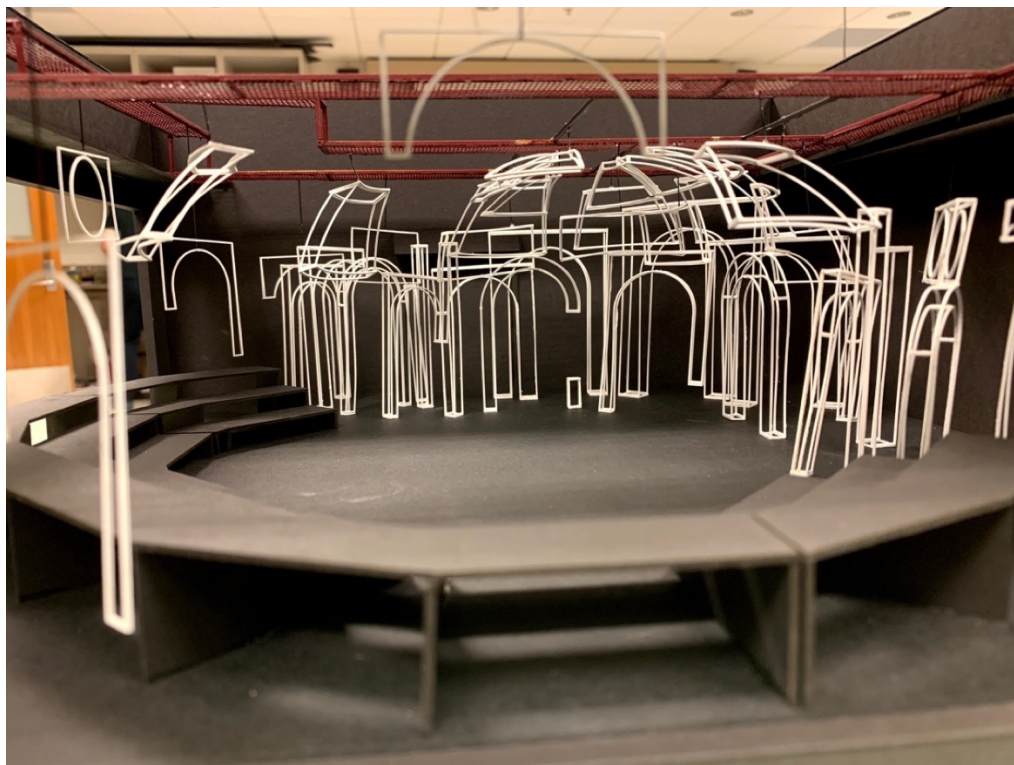


*Figure 61*

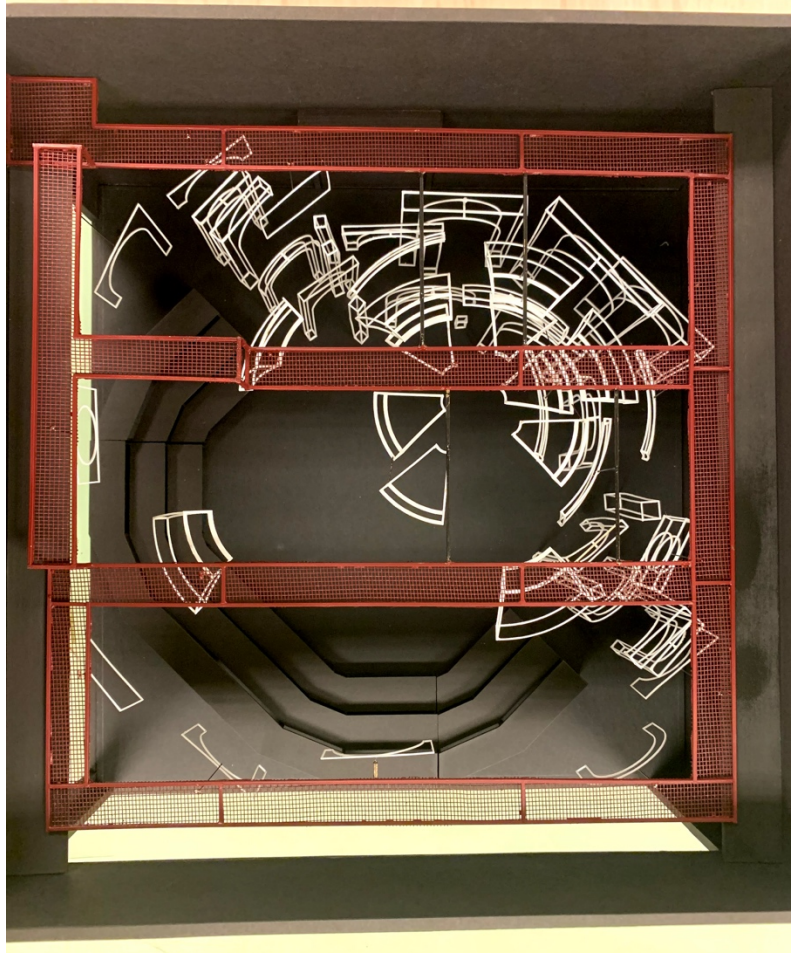




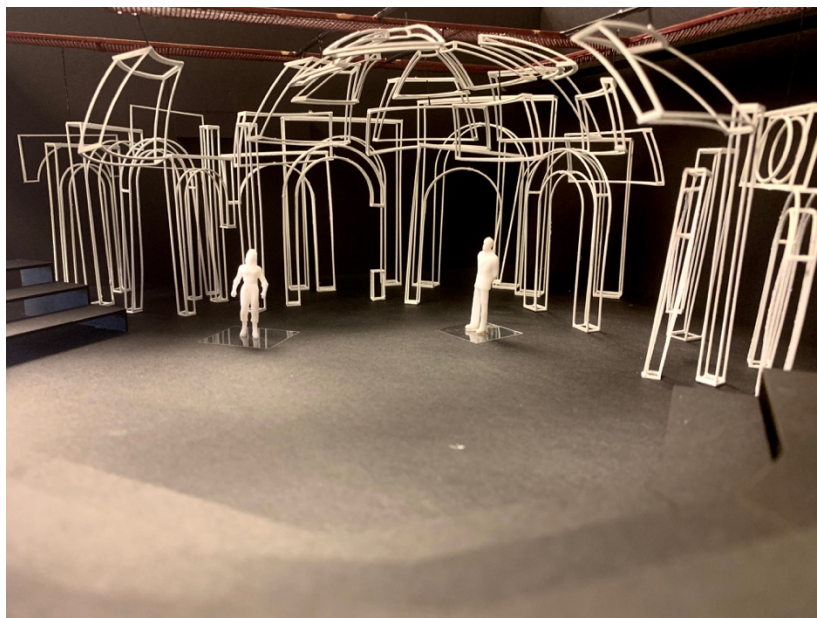
*Figure 62*



*Figure 63*



*Figure 64*



*Figure 65*

## CHAPTER 2: THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

### 2.1 THE DRAFTING & DRAFTING PACKET

Following the design process, the next step was to create a technical drafting packet. Once I drafted the show, I submitted the packet to the Technical Director, Mark Rapach, and the Assistant Technical Director, Michael Driggers, to complete the cost-out. *Orlando* had a scenery budget of \$7,000, and my initial cost-out came to \$11,343, causing me to be roughly \$4,000 over budget. A significant amount of the budget went into the deck alone, so I worked with Michael Driggers to formulate alternative options to bring the cost down, including narrowing the offstage ramps and cutting down on the upstage steps. This edit brought the cost down for the deck substantially, cutting nearly half of the cost. I still needed to make further edits, but I was concerned that cutting the architectural pieces would impact the design significantly, so I carefully planned what edits I would make. I essentially left the center stage as designed and focused on making changes to the exterior hanging architecture units. These edits brought the cost down yet again, and with roughly \$1,000 from the contingency fund, the set design moved forward. The final drafting packet is included below (Figure 66-75).



TECHNICAL DRAFTING PACKET

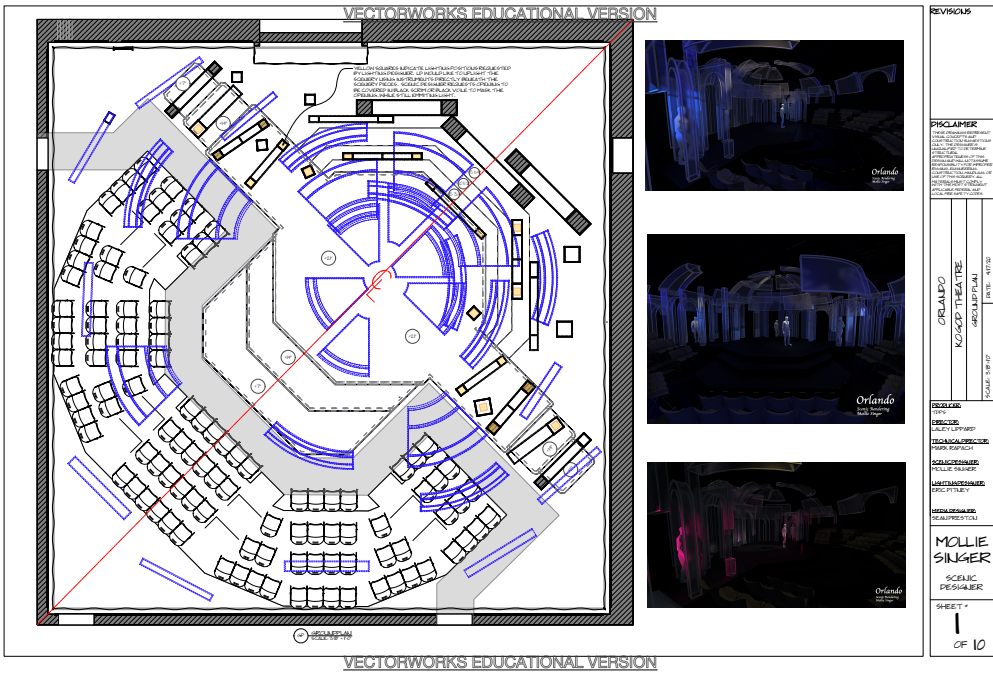


Figure 66

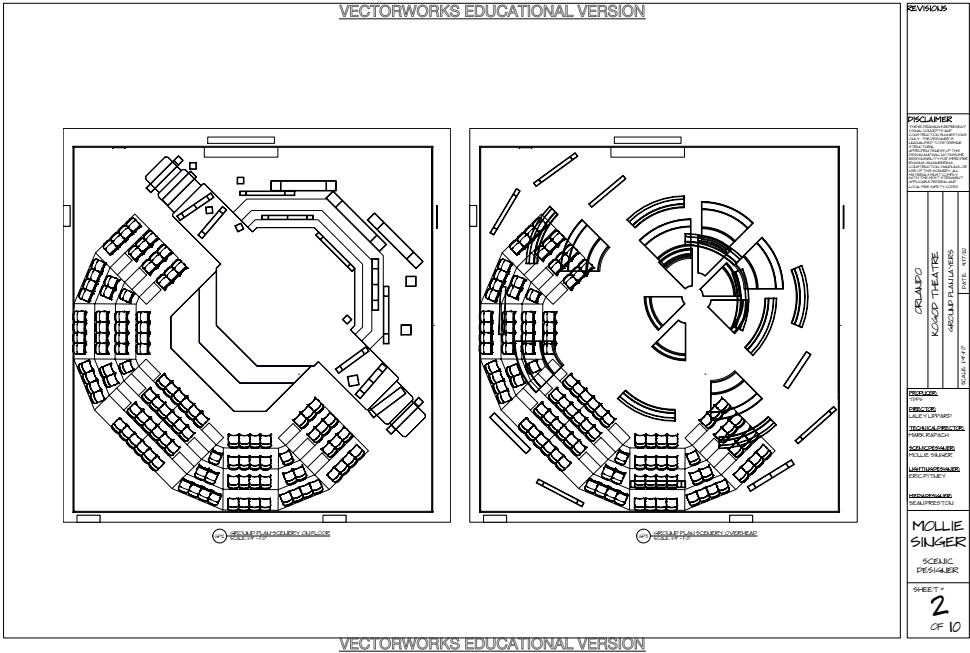
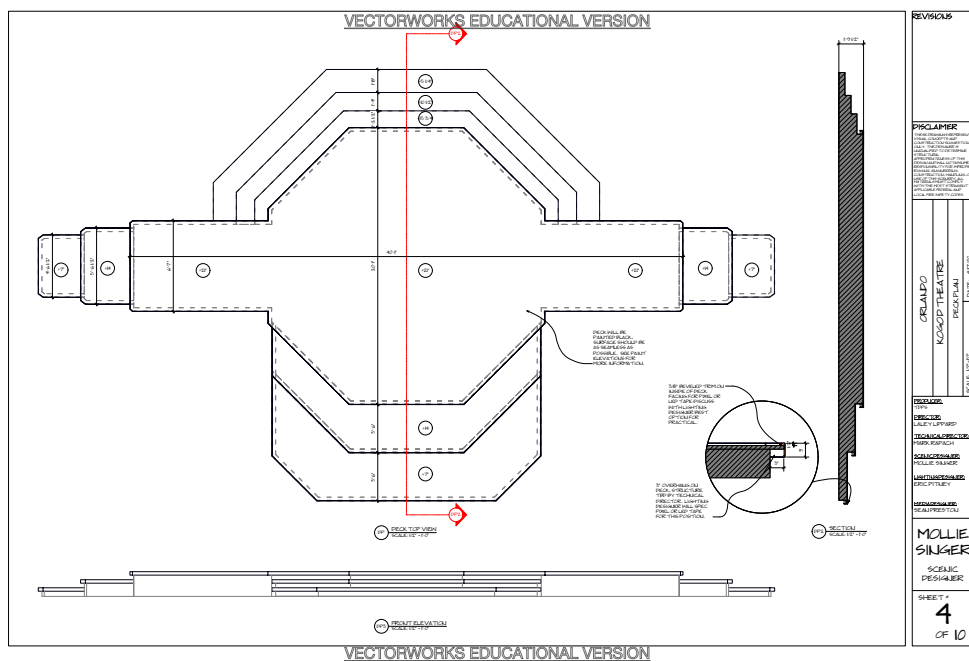
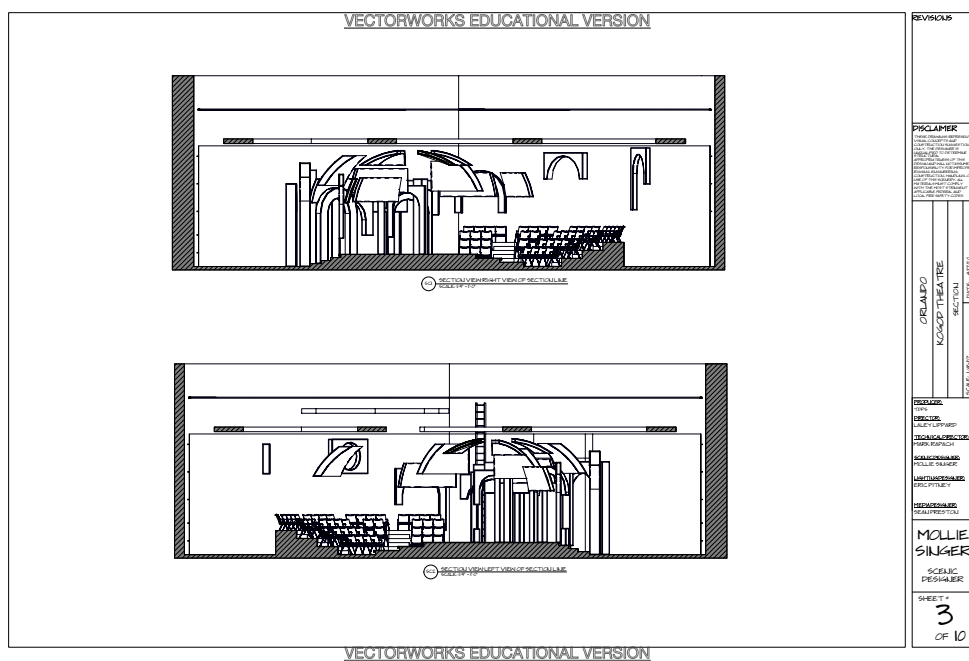


Figure 67



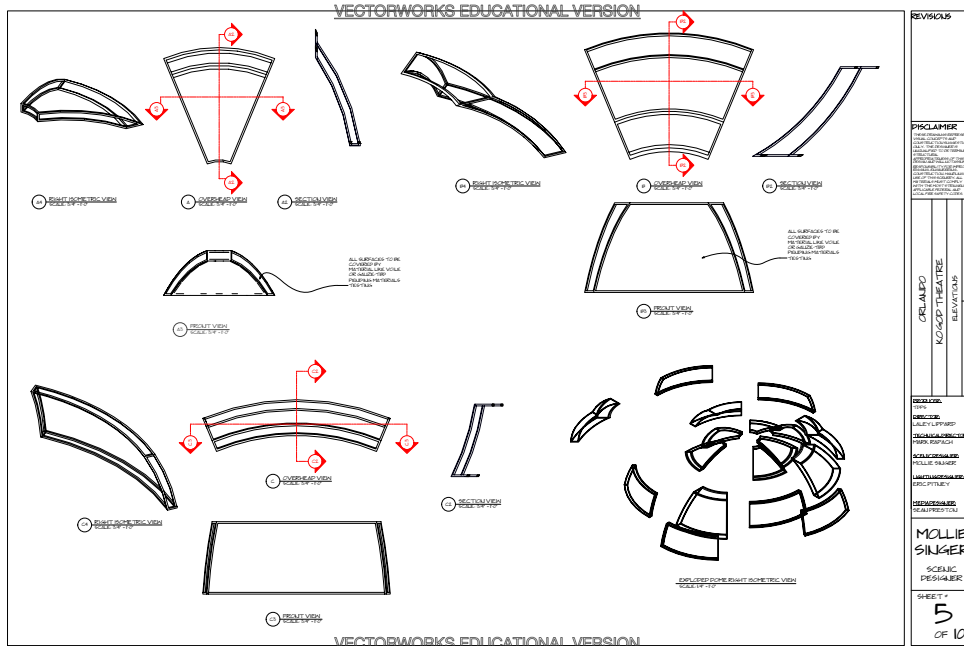


Figure 70

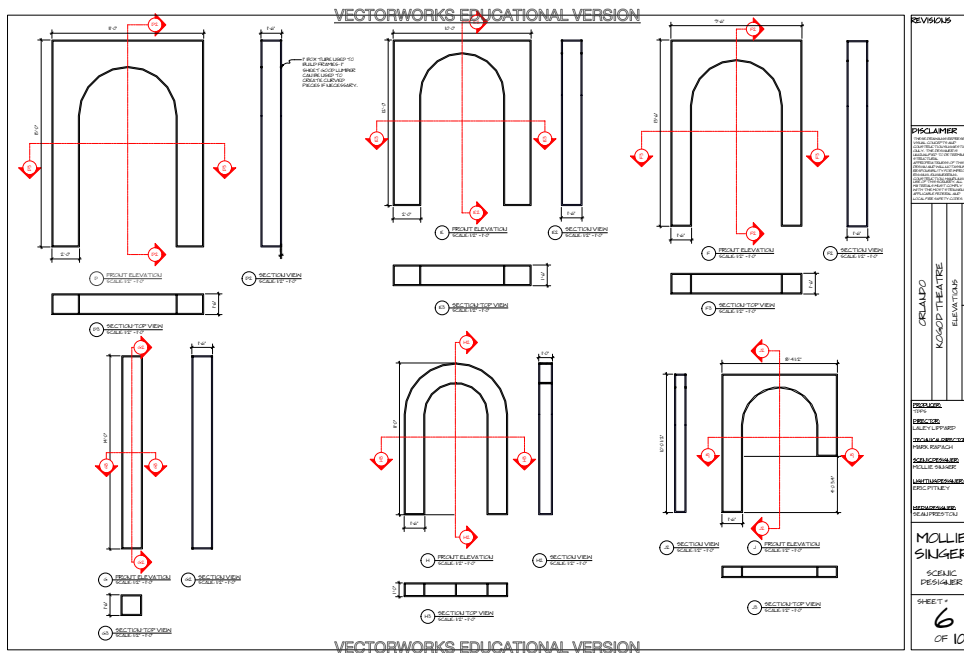


Figure 71

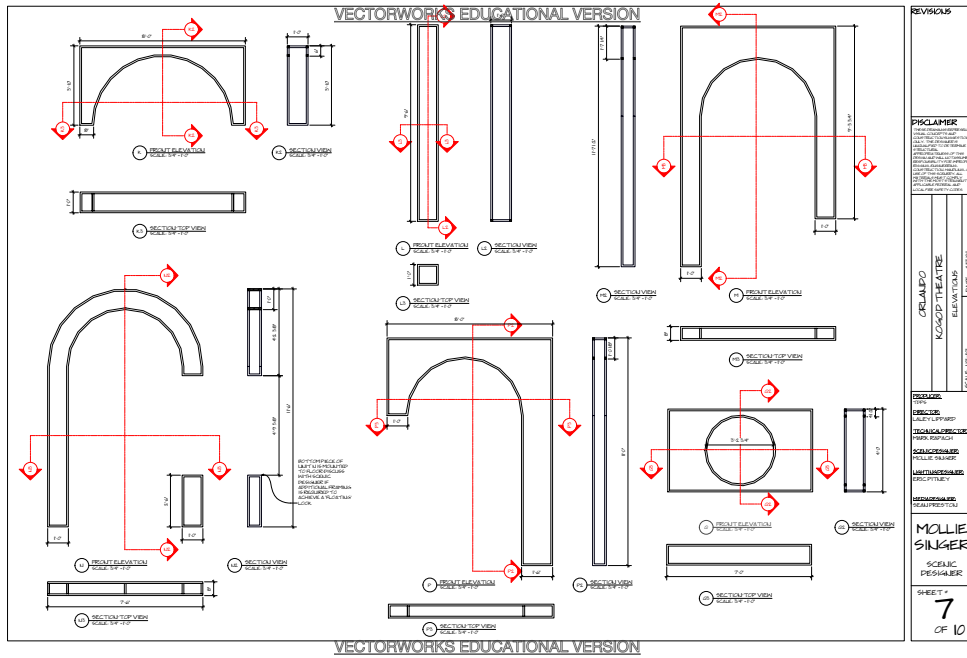


Figure 72

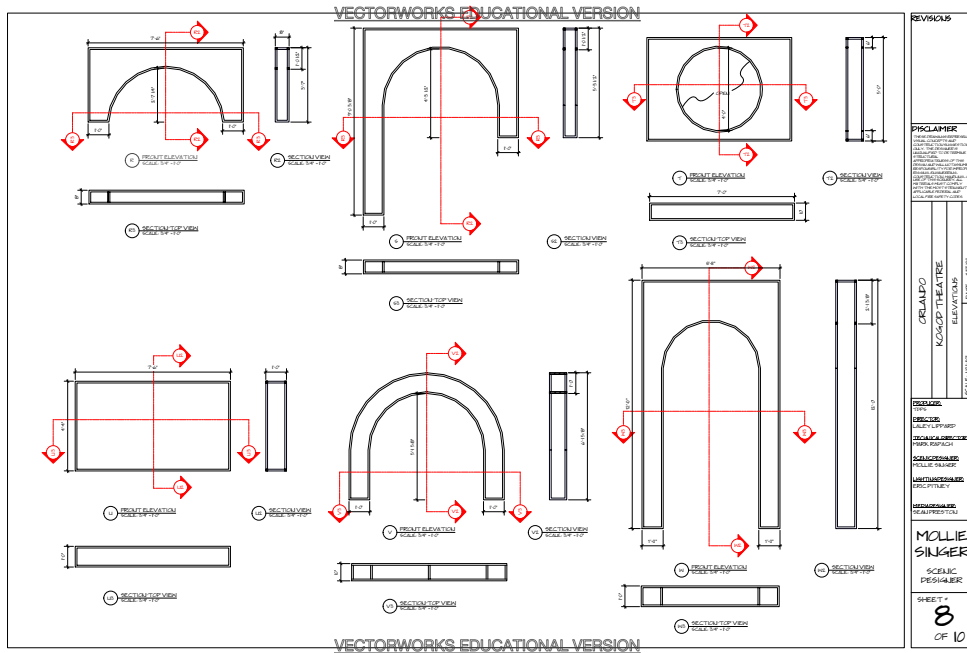


Figure 73



## 2.2 PAINT ELEVATIONS

In addition to the technical drafting packet, I also had to submit paint elevations to the Scenic Charge, Ann Chismar. The paint elevations are used both as a communication tool for the charge artist to understand the paint treatments and textures to be added to the design and provide a resource to complete a paint cost-out. The paint I requested would highlight the architecture in white paint, allowing the architecture to contrast with the black gloss of the deck. As I discussed this with Ann, we decided that we would match the fabric color to the paint once we chose the fabric so that it would appear seamless. We knew we would be testing fabrics at a later date, so we settled on white paint with a satin finish until we had learned more from our testing.

The paint budget for this production was \$2,000, and the completed cost out came to just under \$1,500. Please see figures 76-82 for the final paint elevations.



## PAINT ELEVATIONS

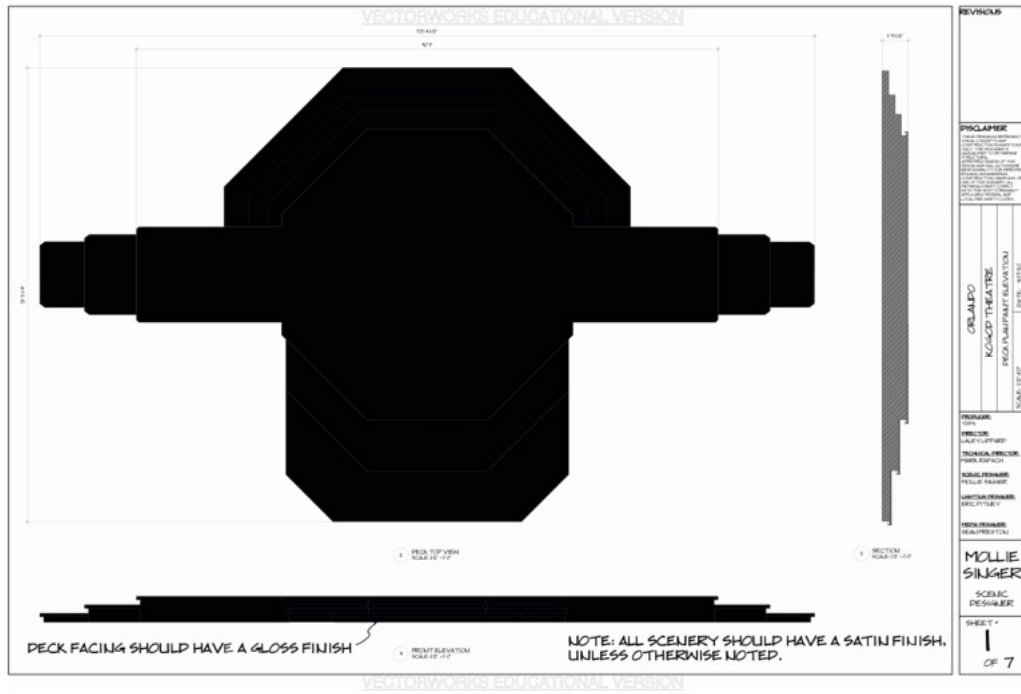


Figure 76

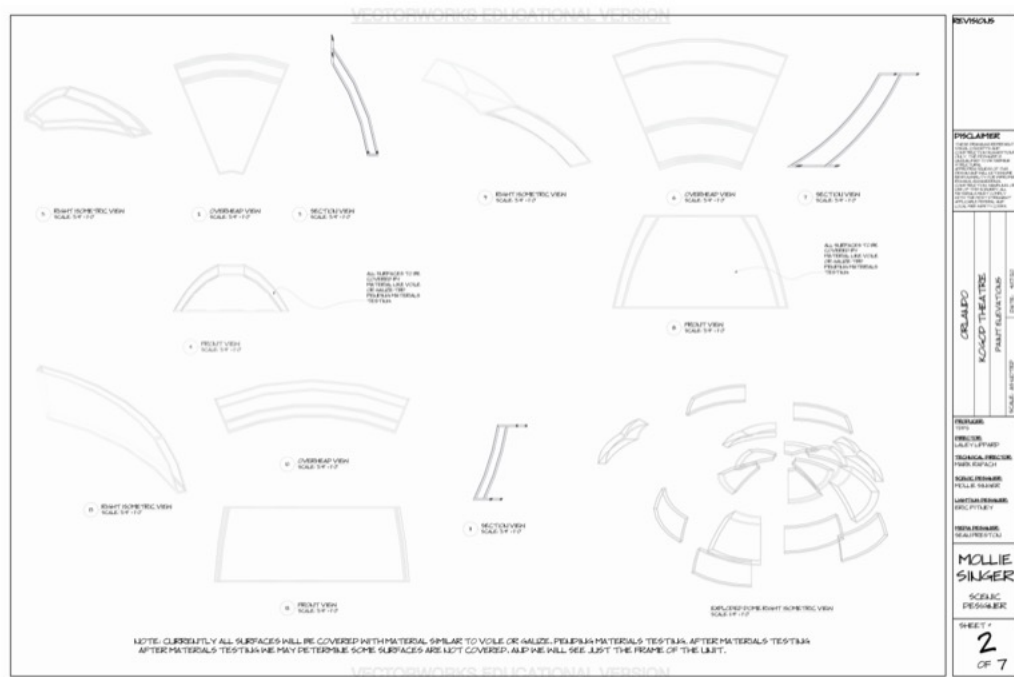


Figure 77

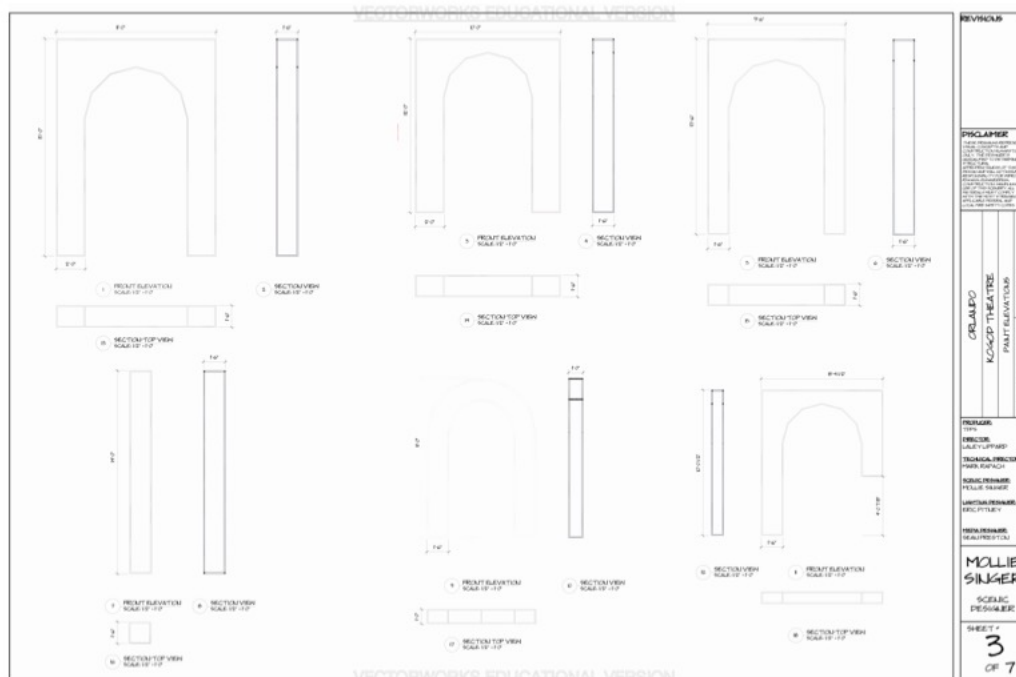


Figure 78

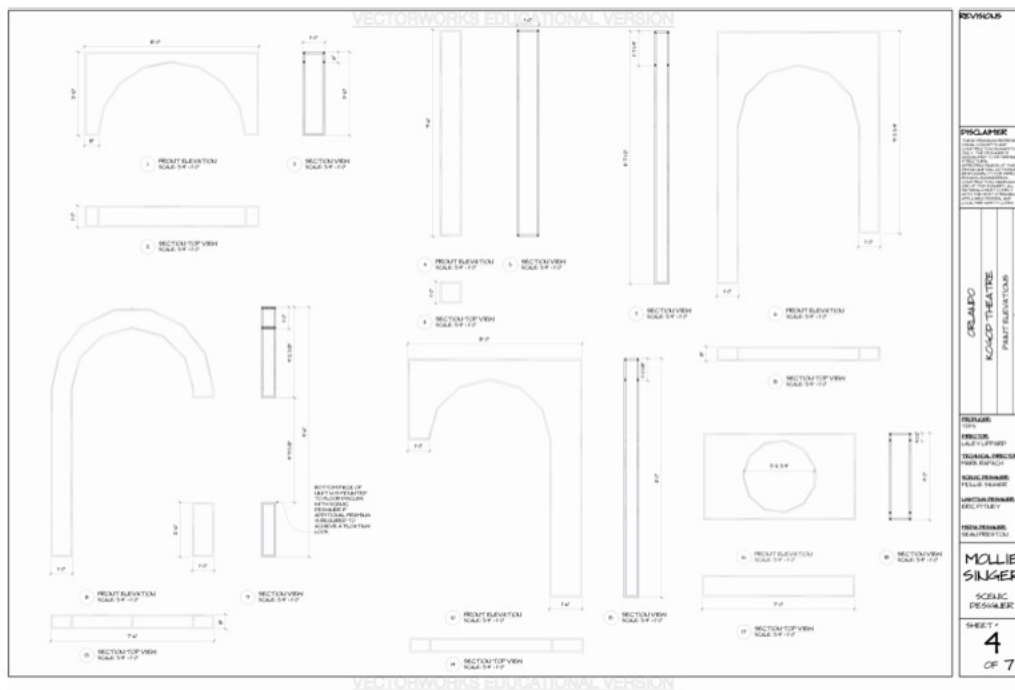


Figure 79

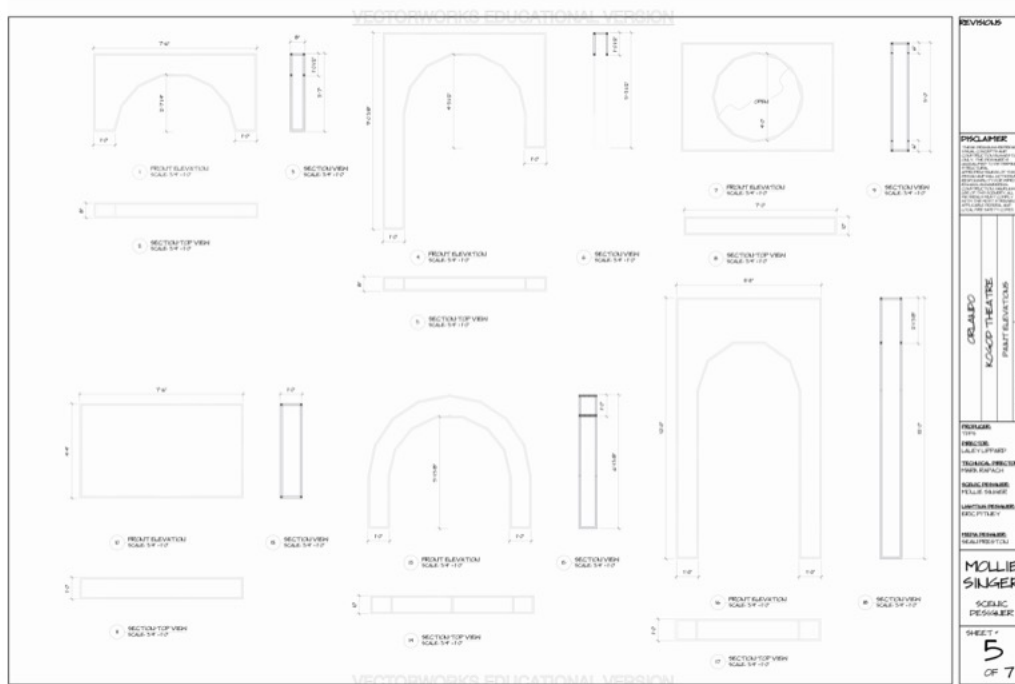


Figure 80

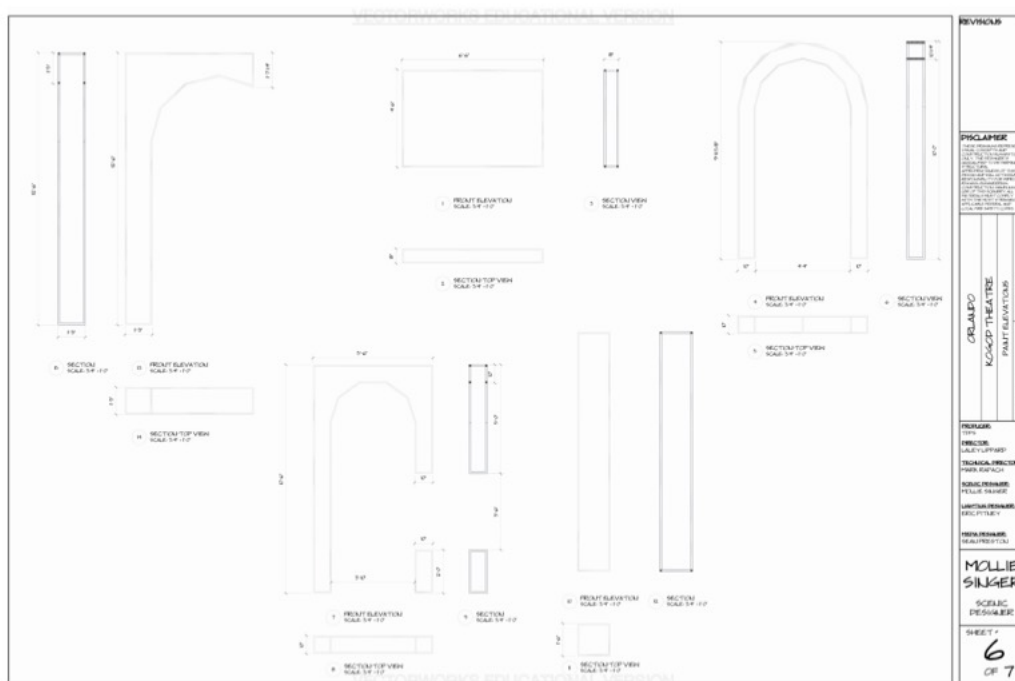


Figure 81

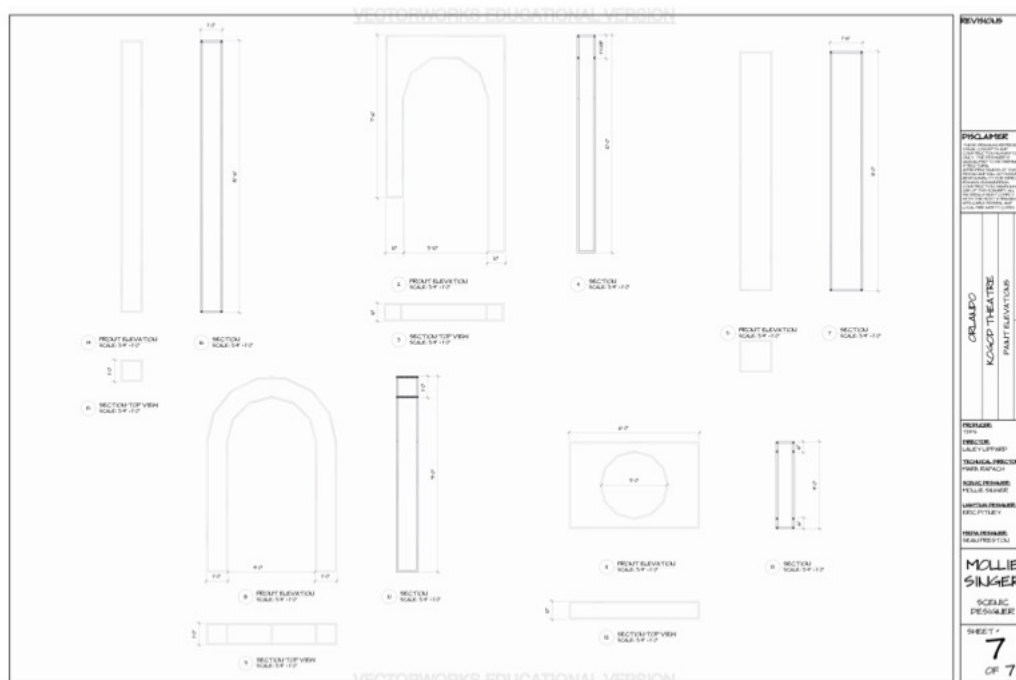


Figure 82

## 2.3 PROPERTIES LIST AND PROPERTIES BOOK

After creating the technical drafting packet and the paint elevations, I moved onto the properties list and properties book. These items communicate the desired props for the production, including hand props, furniture, set dressing, and consumables. This is all detailed in the properties list to define the style of item, quantity, which actor uses the item, and any other useful information needed. Our Properties Master, Tim Jones, then takes this list and creates a cost-out, much like the

scenery and paint portions of the final design package. The properties budget for *Orlando* was \$3,000, and yet, we were about \$1,000 over budget after the initial cost-out. Due to the ever-changing periods, the properties required specificity to transform the world as we moved from century to century. We also found it important that the hand props supported the costume design to illustrate the world Orlando was inhabiting. Consequently, the properties list became quite extensive, and we added a fair number of props not listed in the script but that we felt we needed to make the scene more impactful. We also wanted the props to live in the same color world as the costumes, making many of the props require paint treatments or other specific details to ensure the cohesion of all elements. Please see figure 83 for the properties list and figures 84-91 for the properties book.

# PROPERTIES LIST

ORLANDO PROP BOOK							
GENERAL PROPS							
PAGE #	PROP #	PROP	CHARACTER	QTY.	DESCRIPTION	NOTES	DIRECTOR NOTES
ACT I							
139	1	Chair	Orlando	1			We discussed 3-4 chairs that reflect the set ("disappear") or timetras.
140	2	Sword	Orlando	1		Also on page # 159	Wants to be period
140	3	Mirror	Orlando	1		Hand-held?	
141	4	Writing Book	Orlando	1		Comes out of trap in deck? Maybe location of Oak Tree? Do we want a book for Orlando to write in, or loose papers? Everytime we see it is it more stained, written on, etc.?	Love your direction here, that would be fantastic. some distinguished color - maybe orange, looks old and leatherbound. Maybe 4 different stages of wear.
143	5	Looking Glass	Chorus	1	6" mirror	Could be same hand-held mirror as Prop #37	Let's get 4-5 of the same mirror - super distinct and ornate so that we use it throughout the play, and it looks like it has magically been transferred around the chorus
143	6	Candles	Chorus	2		Live flame?	Do not need live flame, but will be one of the lantern styles Eric is looking at
144	7	Bowl of Rose Water	Orlando	1		Offered to Queen	Don't need, projections
147	8	Ring	The Queen			Queen gives ring to Orlando	Yes, big gold + ruby
147	9	Cushions Feather fans		3-5 2-3		Bedroom of Queen Bedroom of Queen	Yes. We'll need a comforter and pillows that reflect Queens costume.
151	10	Ice Powder/Container	The Queen	1		The Queen powders her face, will need container, powder, and applicator	For Chorus to fan them with. This wants to be an oversize puff that has baby powder or other stuff for a single powder and plume of smoke
151	11	Mirror	The Queen	1		Is this the same mirror or different? (prop #3)	see above
152	12	Golden Sword	The Queen	1		Stikes mirror	Don't need, projections
152	13	Chair (Throne?)	The Queen	1		Queen's Throne? Also page # 160	Will be the chorus, don't need
156	14	Bottle	Chorus (Shepherd)	1			Don't need
156	15	Stone	Chorus (Shepherd)	1			Don't need
157	16	Carnival Items			A Great Spectacle	Do we see anything of the Carnival, or just projections?	Let's discuss with costumes
159	17	Grand Banquet Table		1			Thinking a single plank of wood that is right, that chorus can strap to themselves with allied tablecloth and food. We can talk more...
160	18	Salt Shaker	Sasha	1			mixed
161	19	Kerchief	Sasha	1	Spotted		Yes. Same kerchief as in Othello (Strawberries)
162	20	Ring	Euphrosyne	1	Sapphire		Yes
162	21	Handkerchiefs	Euphrosyne	10-15		A profusion of handkerchiefs	Don't need, projections
162	22	Rope		1	Silk Rope	Closes off Royal Enclosure	Yes.
163		Fur Cloak	Sasha	1		Should props reinforce the cloak? Where does it come from?	COSTUMES. Needs to magically appear from stage (could be back step drawer)
168	24	Heavy Rope	Chorus (Seaman)	1		Length of Rope TBD	Yes. Thick harsh rope
170	25	Dice	Chorus	1			Don't need, projections
172	26	Dagger	Othello	1		Othello stabs himself	yes, period laid away
174	27	Money	Orlando	1			don't need
174	28	Food	Orlando	1			No
174	29	Wine	Orlando	1			No
174	30	Compass	Orlando	1			No
176	31	Broken Pot	Orlando	1		Thrown at feet	No
176	32	Straw	Orlando	Handfull		Thrown at feet	No
ACT II							
176	33	Trepost	Chorus	1			No
178	34	Cooking Utensils	Chorus	6-10		Assorted Utensils	No
181	35	Vulture	Orlando	1		Lands on Orlando's Shoulder	don't need, projections
Mollie. We need to discuss Constantinople conceptually							
184	36	Blanket		1		Comes from trap?	
185	37	Letter				From Miss Penelope Hartropp	X
186		Changing Screen					We need this for setprops in Constantinople that then is used as designated in the rest of the scene
		Candle - live					Orlando will to have at the end of the scene, set for her when he falls asleep
ACT III							
We'll want to create a tea service for the top of this compile with 2 chairs, table, tea cups, little sandwiches, etc.							
190	39	Chair	(Chorus) Captain	1		Different from Act I?	Same as we discussed
190	40	Napkin	(Chorus) Captain	1			For below, we'll want a full tea service
190	41	Plate	Orlando	1		Does a Chorus member hold her plate?	X yes
190	42	ny Slice of Comed Be	Orlando	1			yes
191	43	Sauce	(Chorus) Captain	1			yes
193	44	Telescope	Orlando	1			yes
195	45	Luggage	Orlando	2			yes
195	46	Torches	(Chorus) Servants	6-8		Live Flame-Lanterns? DMX controlled?	yes
196	47	Letter	Orlando	1			X yes
197	48	Potted Palms		2			Let's discuss. Wants to be funny. Maybe a number of chorus holds palms or other plants. This will want a larger conversation
197	49	Candle	Orlando	1	Silver Candle	Live Flame	Doesn't need to be live
200	50	Table		1		Do we need this?	Yes, same tea service from boat. It will be a site gag
203	51	Cup of Tea	Orlando/Archduke	2	With lumps of sugar	How does the tea get there? Ensemble?	see
204	52	Money (Pounds)	Archduke		20,000 Pounds	Paid in the amount of 500 pounds at a time	don't need
206	53	Toad	Orlando	1		Drops down shirt of Archduke	don't need
ACT IV							
207	54	Tinkets	Chorus		Dolles, Curtains, Mannequin	Do we want these?	Maybe. Mannequins might be fun, are there some in stock/brag?
207	55	Umbrella	Orlando	1	Gray		yes. Orlando has a big black Umbrella. Vhrous has 3-4 Big white umbrellas. DASH
207	56	Mirror		1		Is this a different mirror?	See above
210	57	Wedding Ring	(Chorus) Maid	1		Do we see anything that is listed on page # 208? NO	yes.
210	58	Wedding Rings	MANY		Dropped from the Sky	Projection?	no
211	59	Pen	Orlando	1			yes.
211	59	Ink Well	Orlando	1			yes.
212	60	Feather	Orlando	1	Picks up and puts in hat		A white plume... or peacock. Maybe
213	61	Abstracted Horse	Marmaduke			What does this look like?	Is there a saddle in storage/stock?
221	62	Rings	Marmaduke/Orlando	2	Wedding rings	???	yes, we need wedding rings
224	63	Light Switch	Orlando	1		???	no
Do we see anything listed on page # 225? Sponges, bird cages, American Cloth, etc. NO							
227	64	Bed Sheets	(Chorus) Salesperson	1			COSTUME
234		Notebook			Beaten and worn, and empty		yes
Additional Props							
65		Dressing Screens		2-3		Designer will provide drawings/research. One of these must be opaque and work for Constantinople/Note above	
		"potted palms"				We need to discuss what objects the chorus uses to "hide themselves". I think its 1/minors, 2/fans, and 3/screens	
220		TBD				Let's discuss props + costumes for the Marriage Ceremony	

Figure 83



PROPERTIES BOOK

Updated 4-28-20

Updated 4-28-20

Orlando

By: Sarah Ruhl

Prop Book

Director: Laley Lippard  
Scenic Designer: Mollie Singer  
Prop Master: Tim Jones  
Costume Designer: Austin Conley  
Lighting Designer: Eric Pitney

Orlando

Notes on Orlando:

The play spans many centuries, starting in the Elizabethan Age, and ending in the Twentieth Century. The Props should be period accurate unless otherwise noted. There will be crossover between props and costumes, we can have further conversations to determine those items.

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Updated 4-28-20

Updated 4-28-20

1. CHAIR  
(QUANTITY: 3-4)



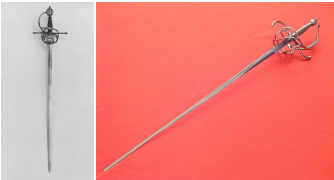
Looking for a timeless style chair- simple, clean lines would be best.  
Potentially need to add glides to the feet of the chairs.

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2. SWORD  
(QUANTITY: 1)



Swept Hilt Rapier, not used for combat.

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Figure 84

Updated 4-28-20

### 3. MIRROR (QUANTITY: 4-5 IDENTICAL)



Will need 4-5 of the same hand held mirror, will be used by various members of the cast, may be placed in a trap under the deck.

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Updated 4-28-20

### 4. WRITING BOOK (QUANTITY: 4)



We would like 4 identical notebooks that all have various degrees of wear/age. Orlando goes back to writing throughout the play, and each time they pick up their notebook, we'd like to see the progression of age.

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### 5. LANTERN (QUANTITY: 5 )



Lanterns will want to be DMX controlled. Is it possible to design the pattern of the lantern and have it printed at Terrapin Works? We'd like to be able to give the pattern to the projection designer to use as a mask/gobo if possible.

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### 6. COMFORTER & PILLOWS (QUANTITY: 1 SET)



Comforter should reflect the Queen's costume, looking for a comforter with ruffles and Pillows to match.

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Figure 85

Updated 4-28-20

### 7. FEATHER FANS (QUANTITY: 2-3)



Fans for Chorus members to fan the Queen with.

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### 8. POWDER PUFF (QUANTITY: 1)



For the Queen to powder her face with-should be puff with baby powder or similar to produce a plume of powder.

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### 9. CARNIVAL TABLE (QUANTITY: 1)



Plank of wood-8' L x 18" W  
Will have tablecloth attached as well as food items-non consumable

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### 10. KERCHIEF (QUANTITY: 1)



Handkerchief for Sasha, also used for Othello scene.

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Figure 86

Updated 4-28-20

11. SILK ROPE  
(QUANTITY: 1)



Silk rope-Closes off Royal Enclosure-Could we have a velvet rope with added red tassels?

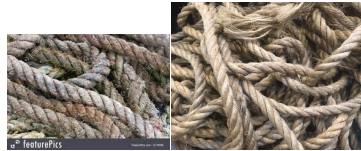
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12. ROPE  
(QUANTITY: 1)



Rope for Seaman, length of rope TBD. Should look aged/worn.

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13. DAGGER  
(QUANTITY: 1)



Dagger for Othello to stab himself.

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14. BLANKET  
(QUANTITY: 1)



Perhaps a textile similar to one of these patterns-blanket for Orlando to sit on.

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Figure 87

Updated 4-28-20

15. LETTER  
(QUANTITY: CONSUMABLE)



Letter-sealed with wax, new letter opened every night.  
Text on page 185 of script.

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Updated 4-28-20

16. CHANGING SCREEN  
(QUANTITY: 2-3)



Will need 2-3 changing screens-one must be opaque,  
could have a cutout pattern, but would need to be  
backed with material to make it opaque.

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Updated 4-28-20

17. CANDLE  
(QUANTITY: 3-CONSUMABLE)



Candle will be a live flame, will need minimum of 3 for  
tech/performances.

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Updated 4-28-20

18. HIGH TEA SERVICE  
(QUANTITY: 1 SET)



Tea service: will need tea cups, tea pot, small  
sandwich tower, napkins, sauce boat, etc.

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Figure 88

Updated 4-28-20

**19. TEA SANDWICHES/FOODS**  
(QUANTITY: 4 PER PERFORMANCE, CONSUMABLE)



Tea sandwiches for Orlando tea service. Specifically we see Orlando eat Thinly sliced corned beef, and sauce.

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Updated 4-28-20

**20. TEA TABLE**  
(QUANTITY: 1)



Table for tea service-Tea service is on 'the deck of a ship'

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**21. TELESCOPE**  
(QUANTITY: 1)



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**22. LUGGAGE**  
(QUANTITY: 3-4)



Luggage for Orlando.

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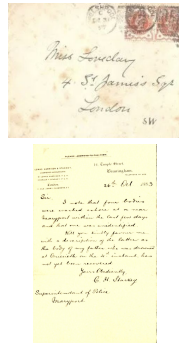
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*Figure 89*



Updated 4-28-20

### 23. LETTER TO ORLANDO (QUANTITY: CONSUMABLE:1 PER PERFORMANCE)



Letter given to Orlando-text on page 196.

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### 24. POTTED PALMS (QUANTITY: )

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### 25. MANNEQUINS (DRESS FORM) (QUANTITY: 2-3)



Mannequins should be dressed, discuss with Costume Designer.

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Updated 4-28-20

### 26. UMBRELLAS (QUANTITY: 4-5)



Umbrella options-Orlando could have more detailed umbrella, and the chorus could have simpler umbrellas.

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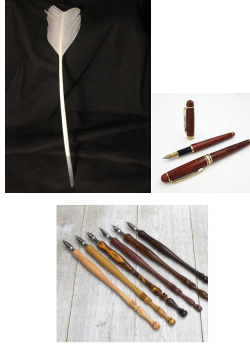
[msinger4@umd.edu](mailto:msinger4@umd.edu)

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Figure 90

Updated 4-28-20

27. WRITING UTENSIL  
(QUANTITY: 3-4, VARIOUS STYLES)



Quill pen, metal nib pen, fountain pen.

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Updated 4-28-20

28. INK WELL  
(QUANTITY: 1)



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29. FEATHER FOR HAT  
(QUANTITY: 1)



Orlando picks up feather and places it in their hat.

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Updated 4-28-20

30. HORSE SADDLE  
(QUANTITY: 1)



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Figure 91

## CHAPTER 3: COVID-19 PANDEMIC & SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

### 3.1: THE *SUBJECT TO CHANGE* PITCH

By the time the design process wrapped up, we were already two and half months into the Covid-19 Pandemic in the U.S. Time passed strangely, moving at lightning speed and at a glacial pace all at the same time, and this is how much of the design process felt as well. Several days after the final due dates, we received an amended production schedule for the upcoming 2020-2021 performance schedule, which ultimately pushed *Orlando* to the end of the 2021 spring semester. By September, we had yet another update: we would be unable to record, stream, or otherwise digitally produce *Orlando*, and therefore, we needed to change expectations.

For a number of reasons including changes in production personnel, faculty involvement, production venues, and other COVID related issues, many too complex to be included in this thesis documentation, the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies made the decision to utilize the completed production elements in service to an original dance composition film based on *Orlando* and titled: *Subject to Change*, to be choreographed by Marielis Garcia, Artist-in-Residence at the University of Maryland, College Park. After nearly six months of instability, we were finally moving forward with this production. Despite knowing that we would not produce *Orlando* in the way we had conceived, I was excited by what Garcia brought to the table.

During the *Subject to Change* pitch, Garcia shared a sample of her previous work with the team and explained how she approaches new works. Garcia's dance style drew me in, and I appreciated her use of space in every clip she shared with us. Following this presentation, Garcia shared her vision: we would create a dance film loosely based on Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: A Biography*. We would be treating this as a sight-specific piece, meaning the set design would remain as is, and the choreography would be in response to the set design. Garcia then outlined the sections of the piece that she wanted the team to be aware of and support lighting, media, costumes, and scenery as applicable. Garcia provided the following outline:

1. Youthful/Self Discovery
2. Reference to the skating scene in *Orlando*/Mystery/Darkness
  1. Gestures of Royalty
  2. Introduction of Oaktree
3. Betrayal
  1. Potentially dark again
4. Joy/Party
  1. Raucous
5. Transformation
  1. Apex of piece
  2. Transformation into colors possibly
  3. Maybe the set gets disrupted in some way-the room has a sense of shift

4. Sense of three used here
  5. Displacement of shape and space
  6. Completely different world
6. Dichotomy
1. Oaktree referenced for the second time
  2. The male dancer wears a corset
  3. The female dancer wears a suit
7. Enlightenment
1. Matching, unison
  2. The first and only time dancers are seen in equal placement onstage

Moving forward, Garcia asked the team to consider what we would need to do to reinforce the ideas outlined in her plan. I immediately began thinking about how the current design would need to be revised to suit the needs of a dance piece rather than a play. Moving forward, I began drafting revisions to follow up in our next meeting.

### *3.2: SUBJECT TO CHANGE REVISIONS*

As I reviewed the notes from the meeting, I began to reconsider parts of the design that I felt would no longer benefit a dance film. I immediately thought to remove the deck from the design as I believed that it would be more beneficial to have a traditional dance floor. Garcia agreed that this would be an excellent move to make, and we replaced the raised deck with a black Marley dance floor. We had also

not completed materials testing at this point in time, so I urged the lighting designer and media designer to set aside some time for testing.

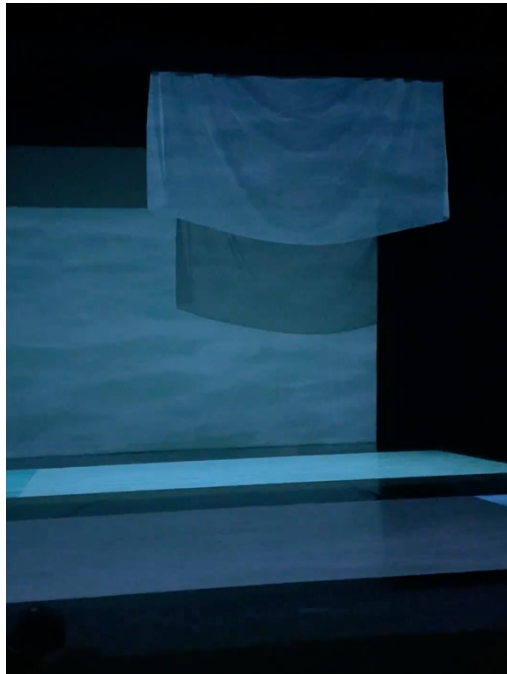
Sean Preston, the media designer, suggested that we test the black Marley dance floor in addition to the materials we are optioning for the set. I agreed to this testing; however, I wanted to be clear that we agreed that the deck would be black in the original design, so this was not a compromise I would make easily, considering this contrast was a part of the original design. With this, we began our series of testing, exploring media content and lighting on white voile and silver shimmer voile for the scenic architecture and black and gray dance Marley for the floor. Figures 92-96 illustrate the media and lighting tests we completed to determine what color Marley would suit our needs best.

Though the imagery was more subdued on the black Marley, I was adamant that using the gray Marley would be a more significant shift in the aesthetics of the design than I was comfortable with and that the design may not be as successful. Therefore, we kept with the black Marley dance floor and proceeded to test fabric samples for the set. I had initially asked to sample five different materials (figures 97-101); however, this did not happen due to miscommunications with the scenic shop and myself. Regardless, my instinct was that either a white voile or a shimmer voile would work well, so we moved forward with that. Voile has a great deal of versatility when media and lighting are added or subtracted to the material, so we began testing both a white voile and a silver shimmer voile. We discovered that the shimmer voile had an iridescent quality that we all agreed complimented the design more so than the white

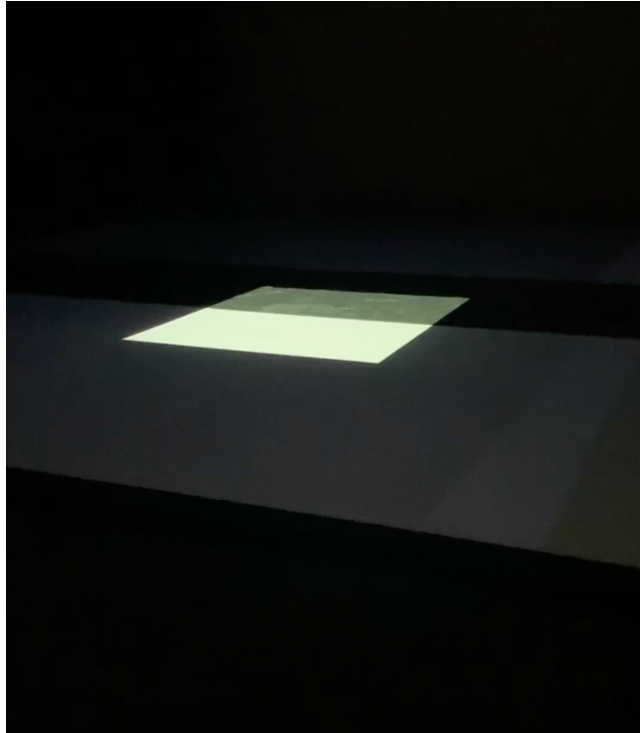


voile, which looked quite flat in comparison. We also loved that the material could become nearly opaque under certain lighting and media layering circumstances and could be nearly transparent under other circumstances. Figures 102-107 show the testing of media and lighting on the shimmer voile and the white voile.

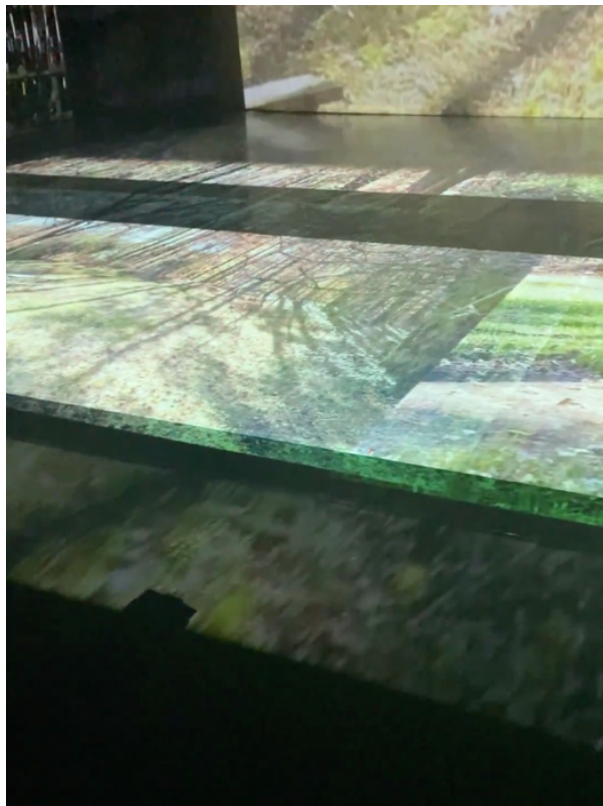
#### MARLEY DANCE FLOOR TESTING



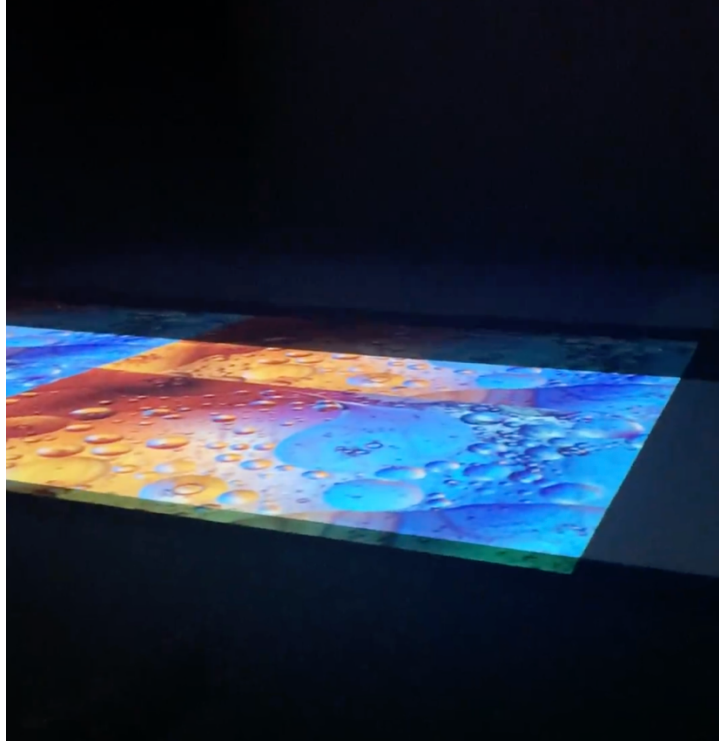
*Figure 92*



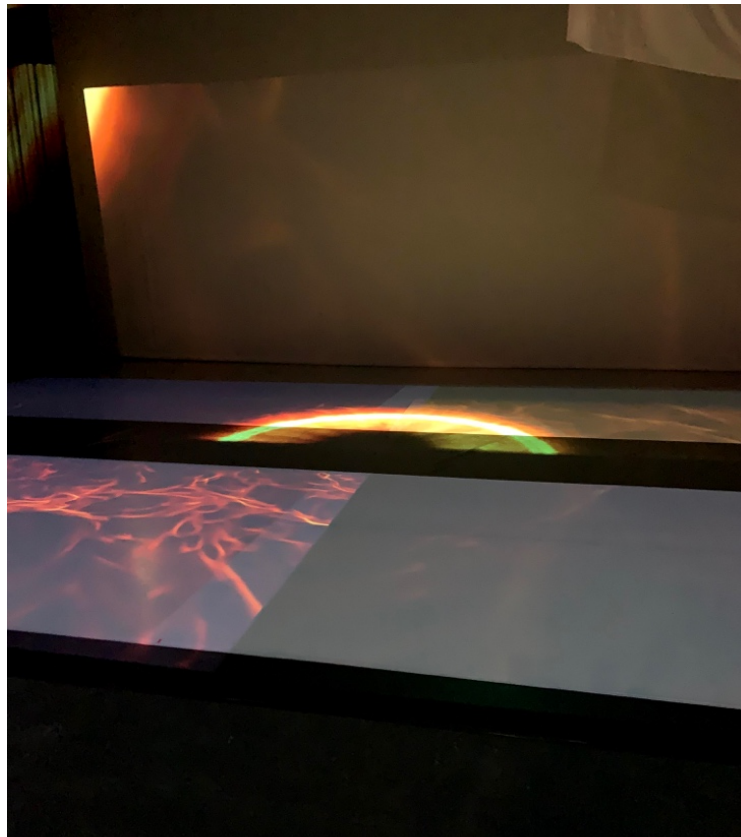
*Figure 93*



*Figure 94*



*Figure 95*

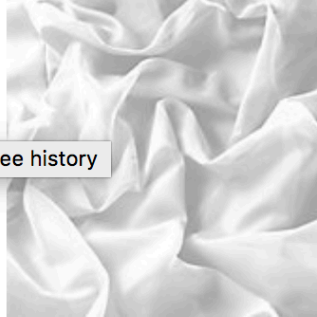


*Figure 96*

## FABRIC SAMPLES

### Extra Wide 16'5" White Voile, IFR

Click, hold to see history



Extra wide and lightweight for  
huge seamless panels and  
swags!

☐ Compare [View Comparison](#)

Price Ranges

Cut **\$36.00**

Full Piece **\$32.40**

*Figure 97*

### 118" Silver Shimmer Voile, IFR



A more reflective and  
economical Shimmer Voile, in a  
smoky shade of Silver.

☐ Compare [View Comparison](#)

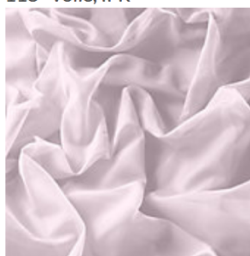
Price Ranges

Cut **\$18.00**

Full Piece **\$12.00**

*Figure 98*

118" Voile, IFR



Our lightweight translucent sheer comes in the most requested colors, along with White, Oyster and Black.

☐ Compare [View Comparison](#)

Price Ranges

Cut [\\$5.95 - \\$6.25](#)

Full Piece [\\$3.95 - \\$4.15](#)

*Figure 99*

54" - 55" Cotton Scrim, FR



An ultra-fine 100% cotton gauze that drapes beautifully. Reduced pricing on full roll colors.

☐ Compare [View Comparison](#)

Price Ranges

Cut [\\$6.46 - \\$6.53](#)

Full Piece [\\$4.15 - \\$4.50](#)

*Figure 100*



### 112" Lustre Net, IFR



Striking, sparkling decorative netting ideal for lighting and projection. 100% Polyester.

☐ Compare [View Comparison](#)

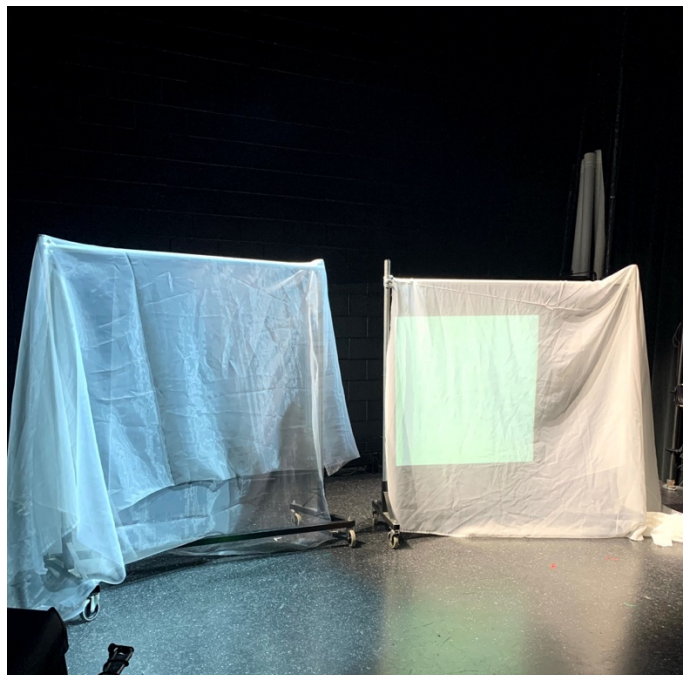
Price Ranges

Cut [\\$20.25](#)

Full Piece [\\$13.50](#)

*Figure 101*

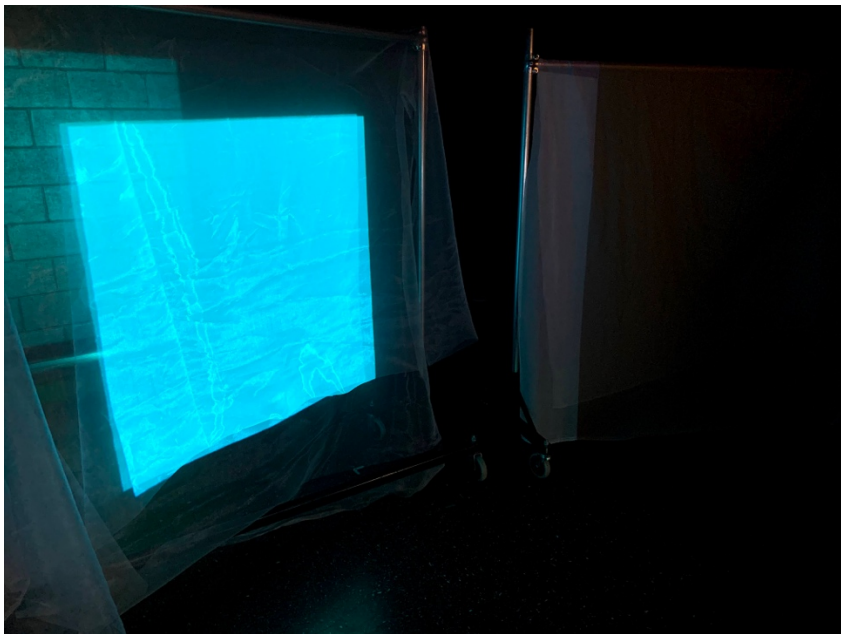
### VOILE TESTING



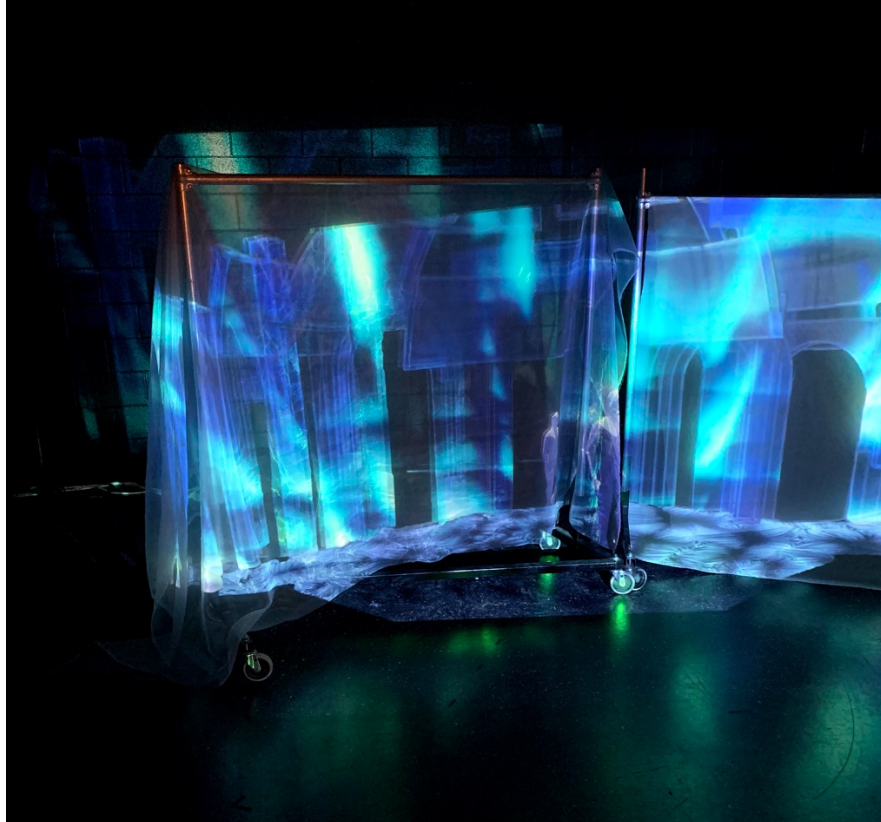
*Figure 102*



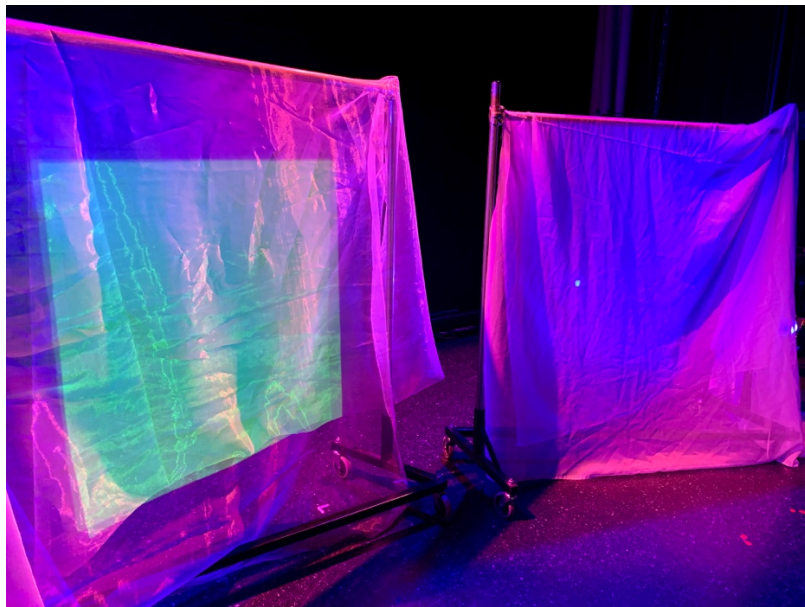
*Figure 103*



*Figure 104*



*Figure 105*



*Figure 106*

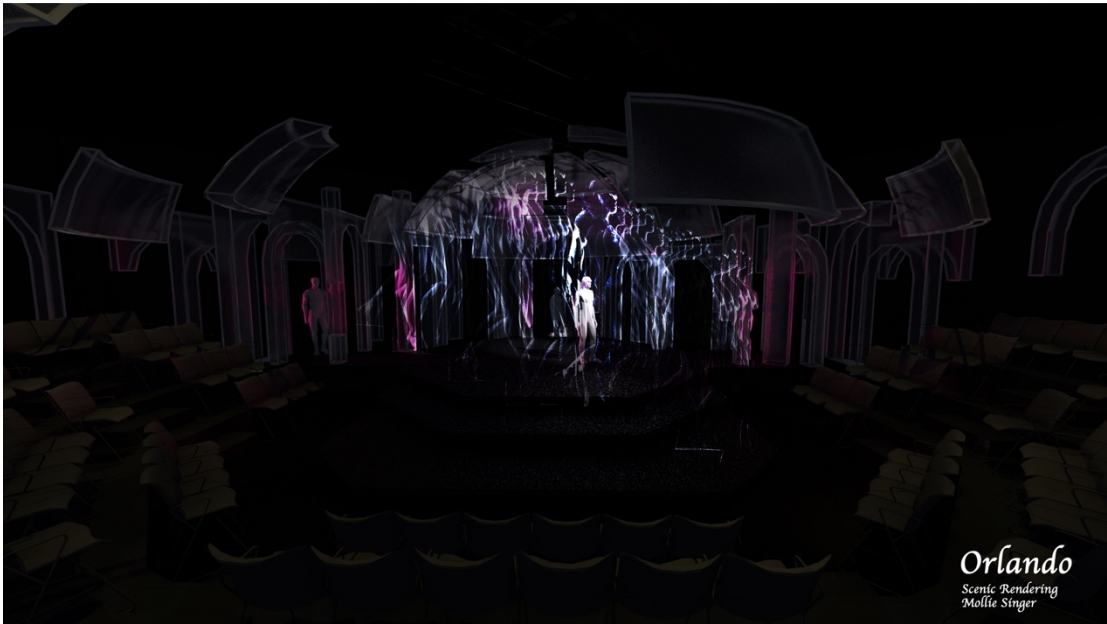


*Figure 107*

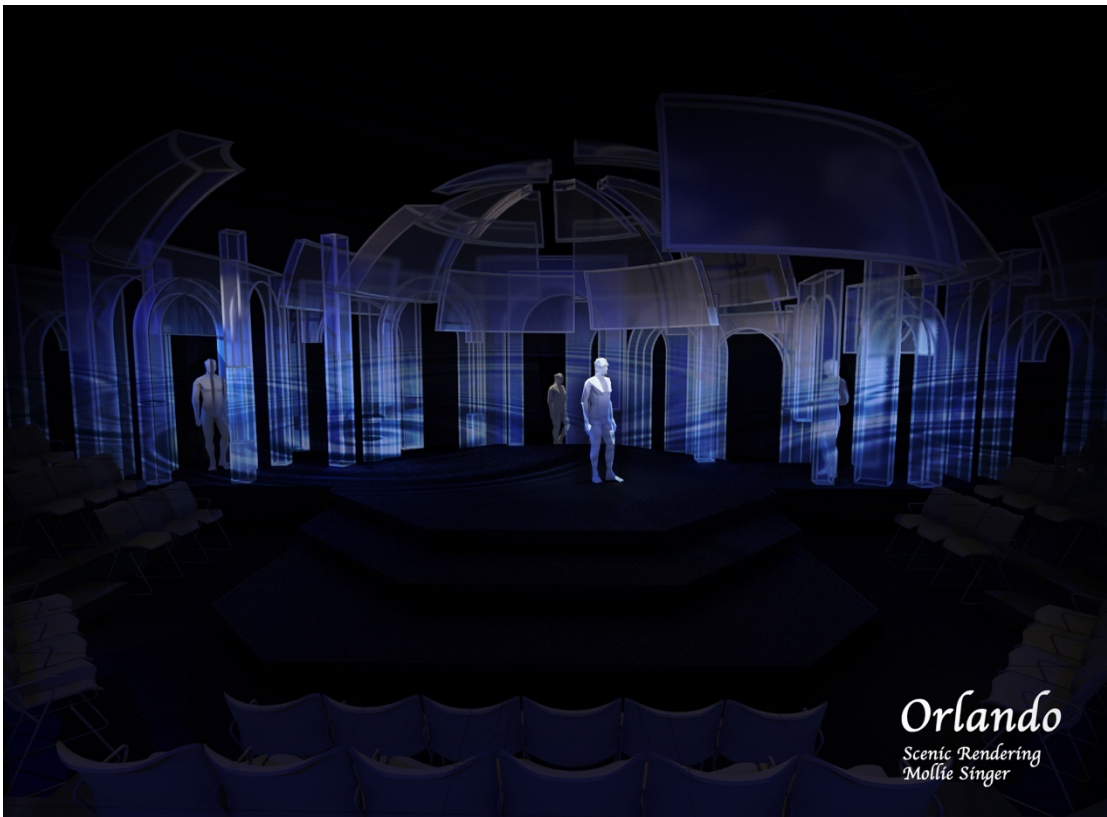
Following our tests, I wanted to provide Garcia with updated scenic renderings that incorporated some of the media designer's ideas to understand better what the design looked like as it stood at this point. Figures 108-114 are renderings produced for *Subject to Change*.



*SUBJECT TO CHANGE* RENDERINGS



*Figure 108*



*Figure 109*

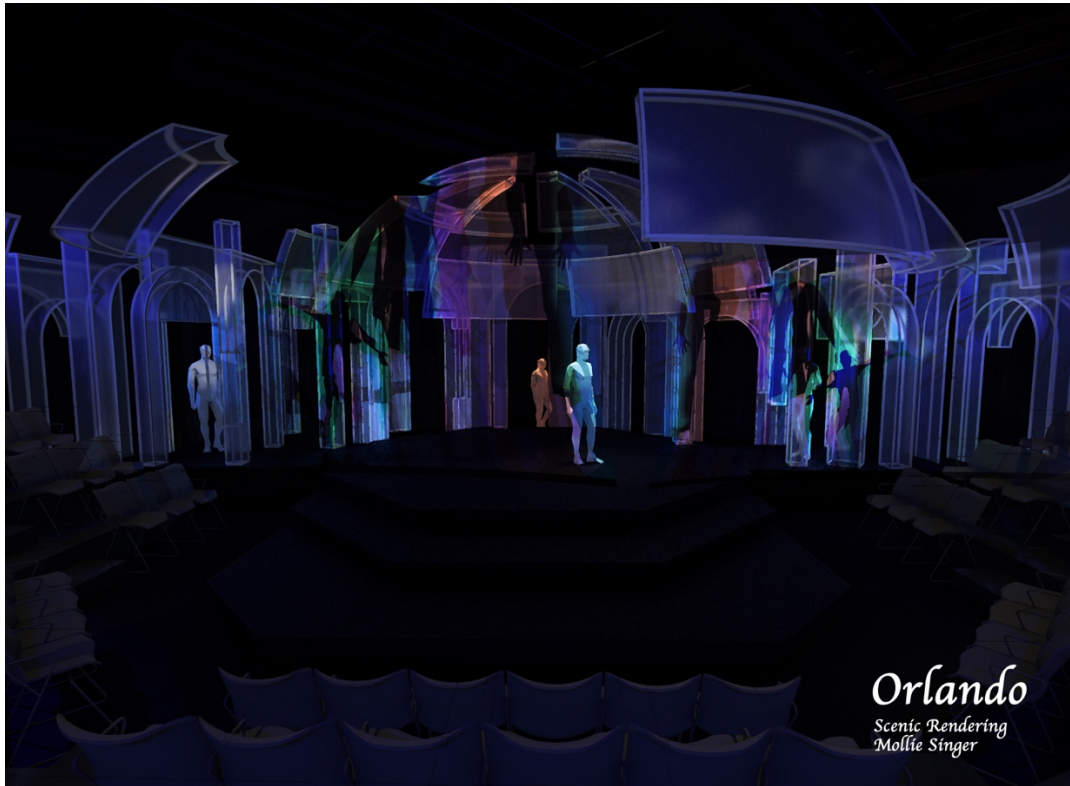
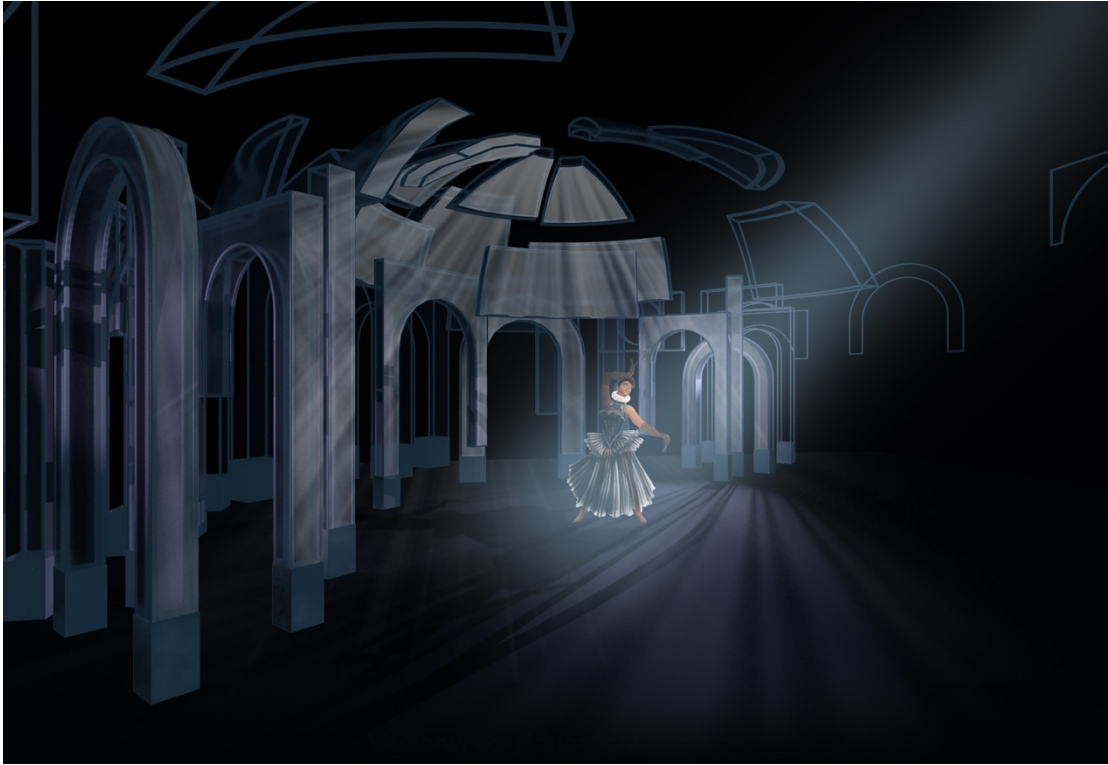


Figure 110



Figure 111

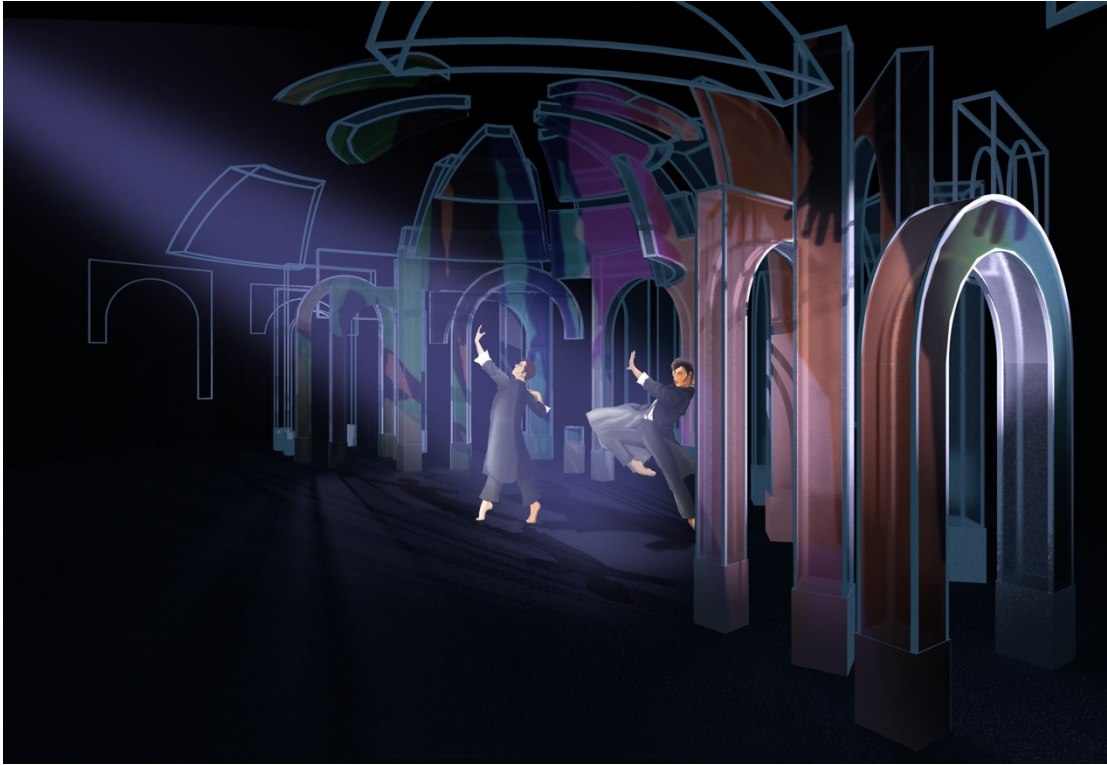




*Figure 112*



*Figure 113*



*Figure 114*

### 3.3 *SUBJECT TO CHANGE* INTENSIVE

As *Subject to Change* developed, Garcia asked that she would be able to have an intensive in January to choreograph the dance with the two graduate dancers and get a feel for the space. For this intensive, I asked that the scene shop build a mockup of one of the more prominent arches so that both the dancers and the design team could experience the scale of the arches and understand the space better.

We built 'Arch D' for the intensive, which was the largest piece of the set. We were also able to mockup attachment plans for the shimmer voile. We had mixed results, discovering that when the fabric is loose, the iridescent quality of the fabric exposes

all of the imperfections of the fabric and this is something we dealt with through the entirety of the tech process. On the last day of the intensive, the design team took time to look at the media and lighting on the mockup arch. This was the first time we could visualize all of the elements together, specifically looking at the lighting instruments embedded in the arches and media playing with content on the arch form. After the success of the intensive, the team left excited to get back in the room and tech the show in April.

### 3.4 THE TECH PROCESS & PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS

The tech process for *Subject to Change* went smoothly and with minimal issues. Due to the stationary scenery and no incorporation of props, the largest challenge I faced was making the fabric behave in a way that the team liked which meant walking through the space daily to check for fabric ripples and making adjustments where necessary. The team worked closely to ensure the lighting and media worked through the view of the camera. After teching the show in its entirety, we used the remainder of the tech process to film the dance. On the final day, we were able to capture production photographs. Figures 115-123 are photographs taken by Thai Nguyen, and figures 124-137 were taken by the author.

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS



*Figure 115*



*Figure 116*





*Figure 117*



*Figure 118*





*Figure 119*



*Figure 120*





*Figure 121*



*Figure 122*





*Figure 123*  
82





*Figure 124*



*Figure 125*



*Figure 126*

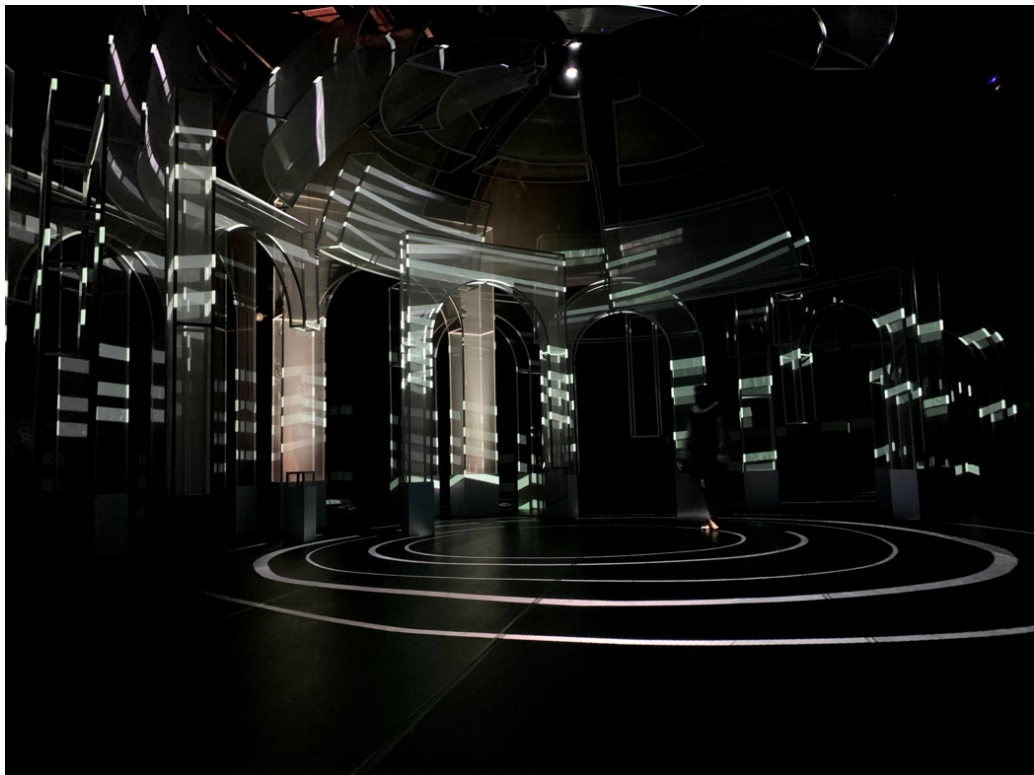


*Figure 127*





*Figure 128*



*Figure 129*





*Figure 130*



*Figure 131*



*Figure 132*



*Figure 133*





*Figure 134*



*Figure 135*



*Figure 136*



*Figure 137*

## CHAPTER 4: REFLECTION

Looking back at the design process, I am incredibly satisfied with the outcome. Considering the challenging communication I shared with Lippard, the numerous phone calls and emails, and the constant frustration on my part, I'm happy that we were able to get to a place in the process where we were both happy. Reflecting on the meetings for *Orlando* makes me realize the importance of speaking up and voicing my opinion for the benefit of the production. I realized that there were moments during the first part of this process that I shut down and limited my contact with Lippard to avoid contentious conversations, and ultimately, that did not serve me. Moving forward, if I experienced this again, I would make sure to identify where the miscommunication is happening and define my ideas more concisely. Overall, I appreciate the experience because I was able to learn a lot about myself and how to be more present and vocal on a design team.

Following the intensive, the set build went fairly smooth in the creation of the steel architecture pieces. Considering this was all filmed, I wish that I was more vocal in the fine details in construction. For the most part, the welding was high quality, but I believe we rushed through grinding off the excess welds, and that did not leave us with the cleanest surface to paint and adhere fabric to. Additionally, I wish that I pushed to test all of the materials I specified in the technical drafting packet. I am pleased with the results of the shimmer voile, but at the end of the day, there were three other materials including an Oyster Voile, Cotton Scrim, and Lustre Net, that

we never looked at that could have also been great. I also should have been more insistent that we try many options for adhering the fabric to the architectural set pieces. We ended up test three different double-sided tapes. The tape allowed for easy repositioning of the fabric, which came in handy, but I'm not convinced that it was the best plan in the long run. We were never able to get rid of ripples in the fabric and I believe that if we had tested alternative adhesion options and/or fastening plans, we could have had a better result.

Further, there was one additional aspect of this production that I believe I should have been more vocal about. In hindsight, I should have worked more closely with our media designer and maintained communication throughout the process to ensure the show's overall design was cohesive. At most of the design meetings for *Orlando* to *Subject to Change*, we looked at the same research from meeting to meeting, with few updates. My frustration with this grew after the designer said he would put the set into a three-D modeling program to visualize content. I thought this was great, and I had provided him with a three-D model since the end of the *Orlando* process, and still, he never used it. He stated several times, 'as soon as I can get the 3D model, I will put it into Blender and start making content', and that just never happened. Generally, I think the media had some successful sections in this production; however, I believe the production design could have been stronger had the team seen content prior to tech.



Despite all of this, I could not be happier with the result we achieved as a team. The drive and determination of the rest of the design team created a cohesive and curated world.

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